



Conservationists fear rural fringe will be targeted

SIX WEEKS TO SAVE GREEN BELT

Report by Jamie Brassington

CAMPAIGNERS have warned there is 'only six weeks' to save Halesowen's countryside from being built on with new homes and industries.

A total of 22,000 properties and 300 hectares marked for industrial use are needed to meet the region's growing population by 2036, according to a strategy document.

Halesowen Abbey Trust believes Halesowen's rural areas will be the main target for developments unless Dudley Council steps in before a 'green built review' in January.

Mick Freer, head of the trust, said: "This is the most serious threat that I have experienced in my 40 years of volunteering for conservation."

The shortage of homes and industries have been identified as part of the Black Country Core Strategy, a planning document drawn up by Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton councils.

Mr Freer believes 6,000 homes and 75 hectares of industry will be found in the Dudley borough – around a quarter of the overall total – with many in and around Halesowen.

Regeneration

Paul Mountford, head of planning and regeneration, said a 'green built review' is likely to start in January, where planners will identify potential sites. But Dudley Council has confirmed no land has been identified so far.

Mr Freer said: "If the councillors want to protect our countryside, they must instruct the planners to stop the contractors from searching for sites in our countryside. They have a maximum of six weeks to do so."

He claimed that areas at risk include Lapal, Coombeswood, Grange Hill, Hayley Green, Lutley, Oldnall and Foxcote.

Dudley Council leader Patrick Harley said: "It is far too early to talk about specific locations. No firm decisions have been made."

BEST CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON PROMISED



Evie O'Connor, Wayne Edwards, Barry Wheeler and Steve Jones look forward to the Christmas lights switch on in Halesowen town centre

THOUSANDS of people are expected to descend on Halesowen town centre this Saturday for the annual Christmas lights switch-on.

Organisers say this year's event is expected to be the best yet with former X Factor act New Dynamixx among the special guests at the family fun event.

Army veteran David Watson, who won gold for discus at the Invictus Games, will turn on the lights at Somers Square at 5pm.

Mr Watson lost both legs and an arm in Afghanistan in 2010 while on patrol with the 1st Battalion Scots Guards in May 2010.

Wayne Edwards, chairman of organising body Halesowen Chamber of Trade, said: "One of the most popular events in Halesowen's calendar, the Christmas lights switch-on is a wonderful day out for the whole family."

"This year we've endeavoured to make it better than ever – and I want to personally thank our sponsors for their kind donations."

"We're proud to welcome visitors to our fantastic town. We know they'll love it as much as we all do."

The event will start at 9am with activities and entertainment throughout the day, with Santa Claus also set to make an appearance.

There will be a free funfair, street food and circus skills including stilt walkers, fire eaters and acrobats. Black Country Radio will be hosting the event.

MURDER

Stabbing victim has been named

A MAN murdered at his Cradley Heath home has been named as the community reels from a violent spree of attacks.

The victim, named locally as Martin Briggs, aged 47, was found dead at the house in Corngreaves Walk, Cradley Heath, on Monday morning. He had multiple stab wounds.

A man arrested on suspicion of murder was sectioned under the Mental Health Act. The 43-year-old was arrested from a vehicle in a car park in Oldbury at 6.20am on Monday. He was also arrested on suspicion of the three separate assaults.

● Fatal stabbing – page 3

CRIME

Elderly man knifed in random attack

A 75-year-old man is in hospital after being stabbed in the shoulder in a random attack in broad daylight in Dudley town centre on Monday.

The pensioner was attacked on King Street at 10.45am. Police say the culprit was described as black man in dark clothing. The victim was taken to hospital where yesterday (Wednesday) he remained with non-life threatening injuries.

FESTIVE

It's time to get lit up in Shell Corner

THE Shell Corner area of Halesowen is going to host its own Christmas lights switch-on event next week.

The Shell Corner switch-on is on Friday (November 24) at 4pm. The event at Long Lane Library will get under way at 3.15pm. Hot drinks will be served and a local choir will be performing. Residents and businesses have sponsored the lights.

INSIDE

DOG LOVERS HELP SHELTER



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Woods reopen after safety measures

WOODLAND near Halesowen which was closed to the public amid reports of dog attacks, sexual activity and drug dealing will reopen today (Thursday)

Uffmoor Wood has been closed for nearly six months by the Woodland Trust, which looks after the 85-acre site. It was the first time they had closed one of its woodlands to the public.

Gareth Hopkins, operations man-

ager for the Woodland Trust, said: "We're very pleased to be reopening Uffmoor Wood. After nearly six months of hard work, we now have a clear steer on how to make the woods safer for families and the local community."

Fly-tipping has been cleared away and maintenance work has been carried out on fences, gateways and paths, he explained. The woodland has been thinned out to make it more

open and visible and new signs have been erected. The trust hope these changes will deter illegal and anti-social activities at the beauty spot.

On Saturday staff will be at the site from 10am to 4pm to welcome visitors and answer any questions.

A small team will regularly visit the woodland to report any issues. The trust is on the lookout for volunteers, who can apply by visiting its website. The improvement at the

woodland is the start of a wider programme of events and activity to encourage more people to visit the area.

Mr Hopkins added: "As the problems were very severe, closing for just a short period wasn't an option. We needed the time to carry out essential works and make plans, unburdened by constant complaints and issues. We understand many people have been left frustrated by the closure, and thank them for their patience."

Kind-hearted dog lovers helping shelter

By Diane Davies

TWO Black Country businessmen were so moved by the plight of street dogs in Romania they helped rebuild a rescue shelter.

Paul Morris who runs Halesowen firm P&R Morson and colleague Stuart Sowden were so keen to help the charity that they got on a plane and flew out to Bacau and will soon be returning to carry out more work.

They stepped in to help West Midlands-based Sadie's Stray Dog Rescue which has a shelter in Bacau for abandoned, abused and injured puppies and dogs found on the streets. The team in the UK then helps to find them new homes. Which is how Paul and Stuart heard about the charity.

Friend Katie Hughes, from Hagley, adopted a rescue puppy called Nelly from the organisation and decided she wanted to find out more about where her pet had come from.

Visit

Katie travelled to Romania with friend Anna Hughes, from Stourbridge, to see for themselves the reality of the situation. They posted updates on social media which were seen by dog lovers Paul and Stuart.

Paul, who heads the mechanical and electrical contractors, said: "When we saw Katie and Anna's updates, we knew we wanted to get involved and use our own skills to help improve the shelter. One of the biggest challenges is that the weather in Romania is harsh, reaching -25 in winter, and the kennels are all outside."

Stuart said: "We started looking at ways to improve the electricity and water at the shelters, to help keep them warmer, and also to reconstruct the kennels so that they are better protected from the elements."

For more information visit www.sadiestraydogrescue.com or Sadie's Stray Dog Rescue group on Facebook.



Katie (left) and Anna at Sadie's shelter in Bacau



A rescued dog with one of the new kennels



Nelly the dog rescued in Romania now has a brighter future



Paul Morris (left) and Stuart Sowden meet the dogs

More than 30 jobs lost as steel firm goes under

MORE than 30 jobs have been lost after a steel firm plunged into administration.

The entire workforce at Kingfisher Industrial Management in Cradley Heath are understood to have been laid off, administrators said.

Around 36 people are said to have been let go by the firm who were brought into joint administration by RSM Restructuring Advisory LLP in October.

The firm, based on Cradley Business Park, Overend Road, specialise in steel fabrications. This includes transfer chutes, cyclones, hoppers, vessels and process pipework.

Council chiefs have said it would be 'a great loss to the community' if the company was to close and deemed the job losses of staff 'a great shame'.

Cradley Heath ward councillor Caroline White said: "If the company does have to close after this it would be a great shame to lose a local company that deals in the business that they do."

"It is a great shame for people to lose their jobs in such a manner."

The firm's website states its aims are 'to grow a profitable business' and pledge to 'encourage and empower staff to make a difference.'

Kingfisher Industrial Management declined to comment.

Horse rider is dressage champ

A HALESOWEN horse-rider has been crowned a dressage champion at a national competition.

Amy Parkes, 31, won the Elementary for Pure-Breds at the Draught Horse Championships at Keysoe in Bedfordshire.

She said: "I competed there last year but this is the first time I have won at the competition."

Amy worksas manager of the North Worcestershire Equestrian Centre, based at Shangri-la in Woodfield Lane, Romsley. She has ridden horses since she was two.

Amy won the event held on November 4 with her 14-year-old Hafinger stallion Stagsden Amaretto, who is nicknamed 'Rocky' because he is known as the 'Italian Stallion'.

Coffee morning brings in £400

MORE than £400 was raised for two cancer charities when a Halesowen company held a fundraising day. Lovells took part in Macmillan Cancer Support's World's Biggest Coffee Morning where staff brought in home-baked cakes, enjoyed a coffee and donated money.

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Club warned over future conduct after flare thrown

A FOOTBALL club has escaped punishment after a flare was thrown onto the pitch during a game but has been warned about the future conduct of supporters.

The flare was thrown from the Halesowen Town supporters section during an away match against rivals Stourbridge last month in the popular no9 derby at Stourbridge's War Memorial ground.

A woman in her 60s was hurt after being struck in the throat by a flare during the derby.

Halesowen Town said in a statement: "The Football Association has considered the matter and will not be taking any formal disciplinary action against the club on this occasion.

"However, we have been advised that the club could face disciplinary action if further reports of spectator misconduct are received and the FA will reserve the right to refer to this current matter in such circumstances.

"The club would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that supporters should be aware that any form of pyrotechnics are banned at football matches and use of these at a match is a criminal offence and can lead to ejection, arrest, criminal record and a banning order."

Halesowen Town won this particular match 2-1 thanks to two goals from Daniel Udoh. Ryan Rowe replied for Stourbridge.

Online campaign against sex abuse

THE shocking reality of how abusers groom young people is the focus of a new campaign that has been launched with the backing of Dudley Council to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation.

The animation from the regional see me, hear me partnership focuses on warning signs of this hidden crime.

Following the story of a young girl, it shows how those around her notice changes in her behaviour. It then turns to the abuser who grooms her with gifts, alcohol and affection before abusing her, adding 'the warning signs were there.'

The animation will go out via social media platforms as 30 second clips with the full version on the campaign website www.seeme-hearme.org.uk

Marking 30 years

BIRMINGHAM Chinese restaurant Chung Ying Garden celebrates 30 years in business this month. The Thorp Street restaurant specialises in Cantonese food. It is one of the Chung Ying Group's three in the city.

£315,000 bungalow being sold for £1



The £315k house that is being raffled

IT is the property bargain to end all bargains. This house in Halesowen – which is valued at more than £300,000 – is being raffled off for £1

Property developer Shabbir Ahmed has said he does not want to use an estate agent, so chose to raffle the detached bungalow off instead.

Mr Ahmed is selling the recently refurbished home, in Fallowfield Road, by selling tickets online for a quid.

The raffle opened to entries on November 1 and the winner of the house, valued at £315,000, will be announced on February 8.

Mr Ahmed, 39, said: "I thought it was time for a change and I wanted to sell the house. I came across this concept and thought it was a bit different and very interesting.

"I like how it was a bit different compared to the usual way of going through an estate agent. It's less hassle.

"I also think it's good to help people who can't afford to buy a house and it helps get somebody on the property ladder."

Mr Ahmed is selling the house through Birmingham-based company

RaffleMyHouse, which has been specifically set up to raffle off homes.

It was created by business partners and property developers Kevin Clark, Ricky Jhuti and Raj Roma.

Company director Mr Roma said: "We thought we saw a gap in the market.

"A few people have raffled houses in the UK but we're the first company set-up specifically to do it. We just want to help people get onto the property ladder."

The winner will be picked once there are 325,000 entries.

Arrested man sectioned after fatal stabbing

A MAN arrested on suspicion of murder has been sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

Tributes have been paid to a 'caring and friendly' father-of-four found dead at his home as a murder investigation gathers pace.

The body of a 47-year-old man, named locally as Martin Briggs, was discovered at his house in Corngreaves Walk, Cradley Heath, at 11.45am on Monday

Residents spoke of their shock while a close friend of the victim called him 'the nicest person you could ever meet'.

A man arrested on suspicion of murder has been sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

The 43-year-old was arrested from a vehicle in a car park in Oldbury.

He was arrested on suspicion of three separate assaults involving weapons, including a knife and metal bar, which happened from around 4pm on Sunday in Dingle Avenue, West Avenue and Poplar Close.

Injuries

None of the victims received life threatening injuries and are understood to have known their attacker.

Following the man's arrest, the body of a man, believed to be Mr Briggs, was found with fatal stab wounds at a property in Corngreaves Walk. It is believed that he had been killed some time the previous evening.

After laying flowers at the scene with a card that read 'RIP Bro', Stuart Archer, 38, said: "I can't believe what has happened, I thought it was a sick joke or a mistake.

"I have known Martin for 30 years and he was the nicest person you could ever meet.

"He was caring, friendly, funny and had love for his friends and family.

"I was only with him at the weekend and even though he had recently had his car taken, he was



Police forensics experts at the Cradley Heath house where a body, believed to be Martin Briggs, was found

in good spirits, laughing and joking. It doesn't feel real what has happened. I don't know when it will."

Another friend, Kieron Ratcliffe, 23, said: "He was always laughing and joking. He had a very dry sense of humour.

A resident in Poplar Close, who did not want to

be named, said: "It is usually a very quiet cul-de-sac where not much happens but on Sunday I heard commotion."

Another Poplar Close resident said: "There was trouble on the street and somebody was hurt. There were ambulances out and our street was taped off."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lottery players get free museum visit

THE Black Country Living Museum will offer free entry to National Lottery players on Saturday.

Museum bosses are making the offer as a show of thanks to the lottery, which has provided millions of pounds in funding for its major re-vaup.

Visitors will have to show a lottery ticket for draws between November 13 and 26 to gain entry.

Heritage Lottery has so far awarded almost £10 million to the museum, funding plans to expand the site by a third, including the creation of a 1940s-60s town.

Cabbie suspended over cannabis find

AN Uber driver has been suspended after being arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of drugs.

The driver from Dudley, was stopped in Sandwell as part of an operation checking the safety of taxis.

A small amount of cannabis and drug paraphernalia was found in his vehicle. His licence has since been suspended by Dudley Council. The driver has been released under investigation.

The car was stopped around 11pm on a Friday, as part of an operation held between Sandwell Council's taxi licensing team and police.

Spellar's welfare standards hope

MP John Spellar says animal welfare standards in agriculture could be improved once Britain leaves the EU.

The Warley MP said it was vital that Britain at the very least maintained its high environmental and animal welfare standards after Brexit.

He said British farms and the quality of food produced will be 'central' to a successful Brexit. Following a Commons visit by farmers, the Labour MP pledged support for an RSPCA accreditation scheme, adding: "It's incredibly important that existing standards aren't watered down."

New store includes post office services

THE Co-op has opened its latest food store in Worcester Road, Hagley, following a £500,000 investment creating 14 jobs.

The store, which offers Post Office services throughout its opening hours of 6am to 10pm, includes an in-store bakery alongside its range of fresh foods, award-winning wines, Costa coffee and food-to-go. The store also brings a boost for local good causes via the Co-op's membership scheme.

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COUNTY NEWS

Council investigate after man trapped

AN investigation into an incident which saw a man buried under a pile of refrigerated goods in a warehouse has been launched by Dudley Council.

A spokesman confirmed the local authority is investigating the accident last week which saw a four-hour rescue operation take place to free a 54-year-old worker at Central Supplies in Saltbrook Road, Cradley.

The worker and the forklift he was driving were buried under piles of goods. Fire crews launched a rescue operation to free the man, who was treated in hospital.

Gig donations help Charlie book costs

MUSIC acts and performers will be taking to the stage for a fundraising gig with a Black Country flavour on Saturday in Langley.

Brian Dakin, whose goes by the stage name Billy Spakemon, is showcasing acts from his Omma N Chain radio show at the Zion Reform Church Hall, in Langley Green Road, Langley, from 1 to 4pm in a free admission concert.

The Buskin' For Charlie event will be raising funds for a book Billy is writing on the life of Halesowen cartoonist Charlie Grigg, who drew famous comic characters including Desperate Dan and Korky the Cat.

Satriani joins guitar greats for a super-jam

GUITAR virtuoso Joe Satriani will entertain fans in Birmingham next year.

The American rock icon, aged 61, will play alongside former Scorpions' guitarist Uli Jon Roth and Dream Theater guitarist John Petrucci. Each will perform their own set, followed by a massive jam at the end of the show.

The G3 concert will be at Birmingham's Symphony Hall on April 30.

Food mountain is a huge boost for Christmas appeal

THE Feed A Family This Christmas appeal has been given a huge boost, thanks to an anonymous donation of more than 1,200 items.

Hundreds of tins of soup, vegetables, meat and fish have been handed over to the appeal run by The Chronicle's sister daily the Express & Star, as well as dozens of bags of pasta, rice, noodles, snacks and biscuits. Baby food and cereal also make up the massive donation of 1,240 items, which filled three cars when it was collected.

It has been given to the appeal by a Staffordshire community association which wanted the food to help struggling families in the run-up to the festive season.

The food will now be distributed along with other donations to food banks and other charitable organisations across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

The anonymous donation includes 60 packets of cereals, 100 tins of soup, 250 tins of beans, 60 packets of dry pasta and sauce, 40 packets of biscuits, 40 packet sauces and 100 tins of tomatoes.

Charities

There are also 50 tins of meat, 100 tins of vegetables, 100 tins of fish, 40 packets of snacks, 70 packets of tea bags, 30 assorted baby foods, 100 packets of pasta, 60 packets of dry and microwaveable packets of rice and 40 packets of noodles.

Among the charities being helped is the Black Country Food Bank, which has centres across Dudley.

Group head of weekly titles Diane



Davies said: "This is an absolutely amazing contribution, we are incredibly grateful. It has really got the Feed a Family campaign off to a flying start. What a fantastic, kind-hearted gesture.

"But I can't emphasise enough how much pressure there is on food banks and homelessness charities at this time. We really want to help the families in our communities, particularly over Christmas. So I would urge all our readers to support this campaign, even if it's just with one tin of beans, so we can bring a little Christmas cheer to those who really need it."

Former Emmerdale star Lisa Riley, who will be appearing in Jack and The Beanstalk at Wolverhampton Grand, and Stourbridge antiques expert Will Farmer, have already backed our campaign, which is running until December 16.

Drop-off points are: Express & Star Wolverhampton, 51-53 Queen Street, WV1 1ES; Express & Star Cannock/Walsall office, Queen Square, Cannock WS11 1EA; Oldbury office: Black Country House, Rounds Green Road, Oldbury, B69 2DG; and there is a drop-off box for donations at Waitrose Wolverhampton, Penn Road, WV2 4NJ.



Reporters Jordan Harris and Heather Large with helper Phil Beecher and the huge amount of food that has been donated for the Feed A Family appeal

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The Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Dave Tyler, lays a wreath as Dudley honoured its war dead on Sunday

MORE than 3,000 people came to Dudley on Sunday to pay their respects at the annual Remembrance Sunday parade and service. Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Dave Tyler, laid a wreath at the memorial in Coronation Gardens.

Members of the community, civic dignitaries, students from Dudley College and cadets gathered for the event, which included a parade through the town with armed forces veterans and a service at the cenotaph in Ednam Road. The Salvation Army band and Dudley Performing Arts students performed. The mayor said: "It has been a privilege to lead our commemorations to honour the fallen and remember the sacrifices they made to protect future generations. We owe them our freedom."

An Armistice Day service was also held on Saturday at the Clock Tower in Priory Street.

Meanwhile, Stuart Garlick has answered the call when Brierley Hill needed a new standard bearer.



Stuart Garlick takes over as Legion standard bearer from Ron Greenfield

He volunteered to become the new standard bearer for Brierley Hill after 85-year-old Ron Greenfield was no longer able to perform the duty.

Mr Garlick, 59, of Kingswinford, will be at Remembrance parades and

at military funerals. Mr Greenfield issued a plea through the Express & Star and Mr Garlick, who served in the Queens and Mercians Warwicksire Regiment, was happy to help.

Enhanced status to protect war memorials

WAR memorials in the Black Country are set to be given Grade II listed status as part of First World War commemorations.

A decision has been made by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on the advice of Historic England, to make the move as the sites reach their centenary.

The memorials include two from Dudley, with the Quarry Bank Peace Memorial and Garden at Stevens Park being given Grade II status. The Stourbridge War Memorial at Mary Stevens Park moving up to Grade II* status from Grade II.

Sedgley councillor and UKIP MEP Bill Etheridge said: "I think it is brilliant that war memorials are getting the respect they deserve. They are the place where people can remember and pay tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice so this news is welcomed."

Cenotaph

Two Sandwell memorials, the Oldbury Cenotaph and Bearwood War Memorial, are also set to be Grade II listed.

Sandwell councillor Peter Allen, a member of Tipton Royal British Legion group, said: "This is very welcome because anything that can offer these sites protection and support is good news."

Lord Ashton of Hyde, the Minister for First World War commemorations, said: "As we enter the final year of our First World War centenary commemorations, we want to ensure the bravery and sacrifice of those who served are never forgotten."

"Local war memorials are a poignant reminder of how the war affected our communities and of those who never came home. I encourage everyone to visit their local memorial and to learn more about their connection to this pivotal point in our history."

Historic England has pledged to list a total of 2,500 war memorials.

Schoolboy's special poem



Matias Irish, aged 10, from Rowley Regis with his Remembrance poem

HE'S only 10, but Matias Irish is very aware of the significance of Armistice Day. The schoolboy penned a poem of remembrance honouring fallen soldiers ahead of November 11 on Saturday.

Matias, a Year 6 pupil from Rowley Regis, wrote the poem, called 'Fallen People', as part of a project after his teacher asked students to make something for Armistice Day.

Headteacher of Netherton Church of England Primary School, Andrew Rushton, was so impressed with the poem they showed it around the school. Matias' mother has since printed out the poem and framed it, where it is hanging up at home. Mr Rushton said: "I was very

impressed with the poem. He put his name on the back of it but I said put it on the front."

Fallen People, by Matias Irish:

Fallen clouds, Fallen people,
Fallen trees, As the world began to cease.

The earth shook, Hell took, And all the heavens gave a sad look, As the world began to cease.

The earth torn, Not a single grain of corn, More people die at the break of dawn, As the world began to cease.

As the population decreases, The world shatters into pieces, The world left with huge creases, All the world ceases.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Pay rise? I shouldn't get your hopes up

HERE'S something to give you a warm glow on these bitter, cold mornings. Next year we will all get bumper pay rises.

How do I know? The governor of the Bank of England says so. A report by Mark Carney says pay rises next year will be "clustered around 2.5 to 3.5 per cent".

The obvious question is how can he possibly know this?

If the figure had been produced by Kim Jong Un, it might have carried a bit of weight. After all, he and his cronies are the ones who decide how much everybody in North Korea gets paid. Although I suspect in North Korea, "clustered around 2.5 to 3.5 per cent" probably means "500 per cent for Kim Jong Un and an extra bowl of rice for everyone else."

Mark Carney, though, has no control whatsoever over the pay rises people get. About the only influence he has is chairing a committee which meets occasionally to set interest rates.

His forecast is based on a survey of major employers, but I really don't think chatting to a few captains of industry represents the 4.6 million people in the UK who are self-employed. Or the 60 per cent who work for small and medium-sized businesses.

Mr Carney, you might remember, predicted instant economic meltdown if Britain voted to leave the EU. Well that was 17 months ago and we're still waiting. And of course, the pollsters forecast a comfortable referendum victory for Remain, an easy win for Hillary Clinton, and a landslide for the Conservatives in the summer. Probably best not to spend that pay rise yet, then.

□ □ □

JUST when you think you have heard it all, Highways England is now carrying out an experiment with traffic lights on the motorway, where the M6 meets the M62 in Cheshire. This is on top of the regular 40mph speed limits we have all become accustomed to along the M6. Why not just stick a few speed humps in and be done with it?

□ □ □

MEANWHILE, 22-year-old university graduate Eddie Ledsham has quit as a trainee teacher, saying he was left "crying his eyes out" by the workload. His grievances include not getting home until 6.30pm, working through lunch, and thinking about work while on the train.

He also said his colleagues criticised him when he did wrong, but didn't praise him when he got things right.

And they wonder what we mean by "generation snowflake".

More rockets in explosive week at parliament



Chris Grayling, surely on the wrong track when looking at the future of transport



Michael Fallon, whose fall from grace sparked the media's use of an archaic saying



Yorkshire vet Julian Norton, as seen on Channel 5, with dog slobbering highlighted

When fireworks fun sparks elderly fears

A READER in her 80s who suffers from an irregular heartbeat describes her local bonfire night as "every bit as frightening as the bombings over my home town in the 1940s... screaming rockets soaring noisily above my garden and then exploding with such force the front window shook... little dogs screaming in terror, my heart fast and painful."

NOW, you may think comparing Bonfire Night with the Blitz is over the top. But I remember interviewing an old chap in Birmingham whose nightly ritual at this time of year was to build his own little air-raid shelter under the kitchen table where he cocooned himself and his dog against the detonations of other folks' fun. He, too, compared Bonfire night to the war. Simple question: in the name of having a good time, how much of a thoroughly bad time are we prepared to inflict on others?

"WE'VE seen nothing in our lifetime that can compare with the motorising revolution that's just around the corner." So says Transport Secretary Chris Grayling on the advent of driverless cars. And yet there's one massive transport revolution happening that no-one in Whitehall seems to want to see. It is a train in a tube called Hyperloop which its Los Angeles makers claim will cruise at 600 mph. Meanwhile Britain is plodding ahead with HS2, an unfathomable £100 billion exercise in using 20th century technology to update a 19th century concept to serve 21st century commuters.

AFTER taking up cudgels and leaving some-

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



one in the lurch, here's another ancient expression that's long overdue for modernising. When Michael Knee-Toucher Fallon was sacked as defence secretary, the media agreed his was the first scalp in Westminster's sex scandal. Scalp? For goodness' sake, how long is it since American Indians gave up scalping people?

AS Parliament agonises about the latest rash of sex scandals, one reader wants to make the point that not all victims of sexual assault are scarred for life. As an airman in the RAF at the age of 19 and 20, he was regularly stripped and groped by about a dozen older women at the local laundry. Far from complaining, he recalls it was "rather empowering, being an object of lust or desire." No wonder some blokes recall National Service so fondly. The key word in all this, of course, is consent. By coincidence, another male reader writes to say he's still traumatised by the "initiation" he suffered as an apprentice at an engineering works in the Black Country, courtesy of the women from the machine shop. They stripped him and smeared his nether regions with engineering grease. He recalls nothing but "anguish, pain and suffering."

THERE'S a modern trend for couples to combine their surnames when marrying, sometimes

to preserve the bride's maiden name and sometimes just to look posh. But there are risks. A Daily Telegraph reader recalls a couple who, despite the urgings of their friends, declined to become double-barrelled. Which is perhaps as well. She is Carr and he is Parkin.

THE Yorkshire Vet (C5) introduced us to a particularly revolting habit - kissing pets. A woman repeatedly allowed her dog to lick her on the mouth. Do these owners never watch what their pets are up to? As they snog their cats and dogs in full view of the rest of us, do they ask themselves what was the last thing the animal was licking?

IN one of those little annual rituals that barely gets a mention in the media, bellringers all over England have been preparing for this sacred weekend of remembrance by fitting leather pads and straps to the clappers of their great bronze bells. This creates what is known as the "half-muffled" effect. If you ever wondered why the bells sound different on Remembrance Sunday, that's why.

THE timing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, was down to fate. Another victory or defeat on the Western Front could have brought the ceasefire forward to spring or pushed it back to mid-winter. As it is, remembrance sits very well with mid-November. The chilly closing-down of the year reflects the sad drawing-down of blinds in bereaved households. It wouldn't be the same if we gathered at the war memorial in shorts and T-shirts..

TALKING POINT



Bus travel: I just want to be left in peace

AS a regular bus user, my other half just loves to hear my tales of the daily journey to and from work (!).

Every day, she awaits my boring conversations like... "So this bloke sitting next to me said..." or "You know that woman on the bus?"

Like the time I waited more than an hour for the 154, but a 59, 89 and number 6 turned up and I calculated I could have caught all three of those instead. Mind you, I always bore her anyway.

But I digress. There is a serious side to this point. Remember Doug Pauley? He is the wheelchair user who, more than a year ago, opened a can of public transport worms.

The pensioner won a landmark Supreme Court case allowing bus companies to ask non-disabled passengers to vacate in favour of wheelchair users. He had begun his fight five years previously when he was left at a bus stop as a mother with a buggy refused to budge.

The ruling sparked a wheelchair versus buggies debate. Who warrants space? Who is the most needy?

Often we hear of passengers refusing to give up their seat for the elderly, or for pregnant women. My own view, is that in a day and age when many buses are full of mod-cons, like digital stop displays, CCTV, wi-fi and charging points, surely there is room for wheelchair users and buggies alike.

Many drivers have refused to get involved, saying they have enough to contend with keeping to routes and times and ensuring people pay.

Meanwhile, passengers, are told to 'see something, say something'. Very admirable, and of course if there is a serious incident, one would like to think that people wouldn't just sit in silence.

However, many of us just want to sit in peace, read the paper, listen to music and not disturb others. So, to that end, I have made my own list of what would make my bus journey more pleasurable.

Have money ready before boarding the bus and don't fiddle about looking for change when you step on; put the paper back in the rack, please; take rubbish with you instead of leaving papers shoved down the side of seats and bottles and cans rolling around; more importantly, I may appreciate your music, but you don't have to share it with me. Turn it down!

Oh, and why do some people insist on sitting by the aisle seat with their bags on the window seat next to them? Just budge over, for heavens sake.

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Auction shows council incompetence

THE Brooke Robinson auction is yet more disturbing evidence of incompetence and lack of planning on Dudley Council's part.

First, against widespread opposition, they move the museum away from a place where people are likely to visit to a remote out-of-town location. Then they discover the Brooke Robinson Collection has to stay where it is, due to the terms of its bequest.

Then they find that despite immense storage capacity at the £7 million archives building they can't find room for the collection's items. So the solution is to sell off the most valuable items – but then buy new ones to

replace them. Councillor Kettle's assertion that Dudley won't spend anything on the sale is very misleading – what about all the staff and legal services' time spent liaising with the Brooke Robinson trustees over the sale?

They now have a building in the town centre that was supposed to be sold after the museum moved out... now they can't and they want to display the Brooke Robinson collection in the town centre. So why close and move the museum in the first place?

MARTIN JONES
Sedgley

Their wives deserve a medal too

WE have read much of the bravery and dedication of our armed forces, home guard, munitions workers and others during WWII but I have never seen mentioned the wives of service-men.

These women were left to raise children whilst subject to bombing and not knowing whether their husbands were alive or dead. They had to exist on a soldier's pay whilst some in protected occupations were striking for more money and feeding a black market.

In 1940, with father in the Army, my mother had four children under the age of 13, had three jobs and still managed to clothe, feed and spend valuable time with us.

God knows how she managed and stayed sane, but if anyone deserved a medal she and the women like her did.

BRIAN OSBORNE
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

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Time for a new EU vote, without deceit

THE realities of Brexit are coming to the fore. Should one wonder why when the vote to leave was based on emotional visions sensationalising unproven concerns. Images of hordes of immigrants were used to maximum effect.

That the UK could take control of its own economic destiny, without the restraints of the EU, is proving to be a monumental error. Many leading corporations, economists, the EU itself, take a very pessimistic view of that ability, in the words of another Brexit slogan, 'To go it alone'. What is shameful is that large sections of the public were swayed to leave based upon falsehoods. Is it not time to hold another referendum based on reality and not deceit?

EDWARD DAVIES
Stourbridge

Government allowing a Paradise for tax evaders

THE 'Paradise papers' reveal the contempt with which the Tory government and their wealthy financial backers view the working class folk in our country.

The Government continues to 'legalise' tax evasion in the guise of 'tax avoidance', providing a framework within which it can work.

If a burglar stole your property, then produced a code of practice for burglary, would that absolve him from his crime? Of course not!

These people are stealing millions from our pockets. For every penny they take out, we have to put one back in.

It is time the Government got tough with tax dodgers. If they decide to continue with this sham, we must remove them from power at the earliest opportunity.

MICHAEL CLIFF
Wall Heath

Keep walkies in the garden

I WAS sorry to read of the recent attack on Jill Boddy's dog (Chronicle Letters, November 9), but I must point out that it is very unlikely that any person's dog would be attacked if walked around an owner's rear garden.

DAVID AUSTIN
Lye

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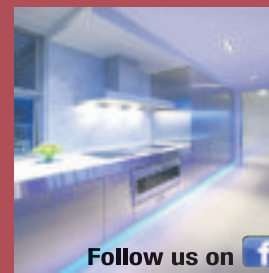
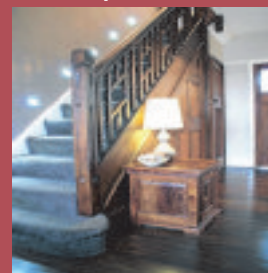
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Black Country roots help Plant carry on with fire

HE is a regular face at Molineux and he could never be accused of forgetting his Black Country roots.

"I had two cats when I first got my current home, 26 years ago, and I called them Tipton and Dudley. They miaowed with a Black Country accent," said Robert Plant.

In an interview with Uncut magazine, the West Bromwich-born rock legend spoke at length about his early life in the Black Country and his continued association with the region.

Last month he released a new solo album, titled Carry Fire, and he is soon to play for fans at Wolverhampton's Civic Hall and the Birmingham Symphony Hall.

Asked about persistent references to the seasons in his new album, Plant said: "I live in the seasons. I live on the edge of the great industrial swirl of the wondrous Black Country."



The former Led Zeppelin front man turns 70 next year



Plant with Tiswas presenter Sally James

Impressive
"But I can dive in there and enjoy the greatest tribe of people on the planet or just head west."
"I can actually meld, bit by bit, into what the physicality or the silence or the bustle or the clutter offers me."
Plant, who lives near Kidderminster, is of course famed for being the front man of Led Zeppelin but he has now racked up an impressive 11 solo albums dating back to 1982. Next year he turns 70 and 2018 will also be the 50th anniversary of the legendary band. In the magazine interview Plant, was asked about the tower block photograph on the back of Led Zep IV.
He said: "It's in Winson Green. There were two towers blocks in Dudley and John Bonham lived in one of

keyed. I said 'what's the odd thing out in the whole of Dudley? It's your car!'"
Over the years, Plant has found himself in some pretty unusual situations, not least an appearance on Saturday morning television show Tiswas, when he was doused in water.
Asked how he will celebrate his 70th birthday next year, he said: "When I was 60, I had a night of humour with my friends at the village pub. Frank Carson and Tommy Munton, the Black Country comedian, were the stars."
"Neither of them are with us any longer, but everyone remembers how they laughed."
"So, 70, is it important? No. Not as long as I can keep my brain in shape and parts of my body."
Plant's sell out tour sees him laying his home-coming gig at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Monday.

them. It looked just like that. He made the mistake of buying a second-hand Rolls-Royce and parking it at the bottom of the council tower block.
"So every morning he came down it had been keyed . . . and keyed . . . and

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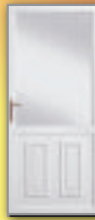
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Now lollipop patrols back under review

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, November 16, 2017

CONCERNS have been raised over proposals to scrap lollipop patrols in Dudley and possibly replace them with 20mph zones outside all schools in the borough.

The suggestion in a safety review comes less than a year after controversial plans to axe funding for school crossing patrols were ditched by cash-strapped Dudley Council.

A new study has revealed that 70 per cent of the patrol sites do not currently meet national criteria, while chiefs have been urged to make 'advisory' 20mph zones outside all school entrances 'a high priority' as part of a package of safety measures.

A council report says: "It is recommended that the council's 10-year plan to implement advisory 20mph zones outside all school entrances, under the safer routes to school scheme, should be made a high priority."

The study, carried out ahead of a meeting, reveals that 55 out of 79 school crossing patrol sites in the borough are not hitting national guidelines, giving bosses a case to remove them.

Risk

But Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "We know how important school crossing patrols are to some people. We want to see the school crossing patrol service continue to encourage children and families to walk to school rather than jump in the car."

"The outcomes of the studies we have carried out will be considered by a scrutiny working group in order to identify what options we have for continuing to provide a service into the future."

Abdul Quadras, a former school governor from Lye, said: "I would like to see lollipop ladies saved. It is a cut culture."

'Jealous' man killed his wife and then took his own life

Heartbroken family walk for Chris



Family and friends walked to remember Chris Brookes, including partner Sarah Jayne Collins, who is expecting his baby

HEARTBROKEN family and friends of a Dudley man who fell to his death from a bridge gathered at the scene in tribute.

Chris Brookes fell from a bridge over Wolverhampton's ring road on the night of October 28. In memory of the 22-year-old, friends and family walked from Dudley to the Wolverhampton scene of his death, raising £1,000 toward his funeral and a memorial bench.

Among those on the walk was his partner Sarah Jayne Collins, who is expecting their baby in January. She said: "The support we had on the day was amazing. Chris was the perfect gentleman, and you could see that by the amount of people who came along, not just his family."

"Now is a difficult time as we prepare for the funeral, but I'm determined to stay strong for our baby." She revealed that the baby will be

named after Chris, adding: "Chris always liked the name Chris Junior, and I'd always say I'm not naming him that. But it would be a perfect way to honour him."

The walk started in Hillside Road in Dudley, where Chris's family is from. It finished at the footbridge between the city centre and railway station. The former Cosely School pupil, who worked in Kingswinford, died after a night out with friends in the city.

A MAN killed his wife after he suspected she was having an affair and then took his own life, an inquest heard.

Paul Lander, aged 30, and Rikki Lander, 26, were discovered dead at their home in Oldbury on August 5.

The night before, self-confessed 'jealous control freak' Mr Lander had discovered a text on the phone of his wife of less than six months which acted as the 'trigger' for the brutal and tragic events which followed.

His brother Blake had been at the home on Pel Crescent at the time and read the message first before showing it to his sibling.

Blake left the property shortly afterwards and then woke up the next morning to a message from Paul which said 'I have hit Rikki with a hammer', although he thought it was a joke. Detective Sergeant Inderjit Basra told the inquest at Black Country Coroner's Court.

The body of Mrs Lander, an administration worker at West Bromwich Building Society, was discovered in the lounge with head injuries. A post-mortem found she had been struck two to three times with a hammer and strangled. Mr Lander, a tipper truck driver, had hanged himself in the hallway.

Debts

A police investigation revealed Mrs Lander had 'gambling' debts and owed £22,909 on credit cards. Mr Lander himself was £3,262 in the red.

DS Basra said several handwritten letters from the husband to his wife suggested he was battling drug abuse, that he feared losing her and admitted to being a 'jealous control freak'.

Coroner Zafar Siddique said: "There was no evidence to substantiate she was having an affair." He recorded Mrs Lander's death unlawful killing and Mr Lander's as hanging.

Experts in antibiotics campaign

SCIENTISTS are uniting to support an international campaign around antibiotics.

The World Antibiotics Awareness Week began on Monday with the aim of increasing awareness about bacterial resistance becoming a serious threat. Scientists believe if this is not addressed by 2050, this could kill millions of people.

Scientists from University of Birmingham will be taking part.

Professor Laura Piddock, of the university's Institute of Microbiology and Infection, said: "Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) threatens the effective prevention and treatment of an ever-increasing range of infections caused by bacteria, parasites, viruses and fungi. New resistance mechanisms are emerging and spreading globally, threatening our ability to treat common infectious diseases."

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Designer outlet to create 2,000 jobs

A DESIGNER outlet shopping centre that promises to create 2,000 jobs and attract £200 million of investment is being lined up for the Black Country.

The new 200,000 sq ft centre could be built on Lion Farm playing fields, just off Junction 2 of the M5 in Oldbury. It would feature top brand shops as well as cafes and restaurants.

Sports pitches would also be built nearby as part of the deal, part funded by Birmingham-based developer Jeremy Knight-Adams.

It is believed the additional jobs would represent a two per cent increase in employment in Sandwell while the development would bring a £200m investment to the area. As well as generating permanent employment, once complete, several hundred jobs would also be created or supported during the construction phase.

The development was first mooted in 2012 when an option agreement was made between the developer and Sandwell Council over the land. Sandwell Council's cabinet members were deciding yesterday (Wednesday) whether to grant the developer extra time to work on the proposals.

A full planning application could be submitted by autumn 2018.

Killer comedy to mark am-dram milestone



Lee Morgan-Salcombe, Carey Esthop and David Laverder in *The Ladykillers*, staged this week

THEY'VE been treading the boards for 70 years and now an am-dram group in Stourbridge is marking the milestone with a production of comedy thriller *The Ladykillers* this week.

Members of Envile Street Dramatic Society are launching a special 70th anniversary season with the play based on a classic 1950s British film which starred Alec Guinness and Peter Sellers.

The company was founded in 1947 by members of Envile Street Methodist Church. Neville Mole, an original member and now aged in his 90s, is still connected with the group as patron and committee member. He still attends as many performances as he can. His late wife Beryl and late daughter Angela were both members, as are his daughters Lin, Jane and Carey and grandchildren Sarah (now professional actress Sarah Thom), Tom and Becky.

Feature

Carey, Tom and Becky will all feature in *The Ladykillers* with Carey as Mrs Wilberforce, the elderly landlady who unwittingly rents a room to a dangerous gang of criminals.

The black comedy opened at Amblecote Holy Trinity Church Hall in Vicarage Road last night (Wednesday) and continues to Saturday, when there is a 2.30pm matinee as well as 7.30pm performance. Tickets can be bought on the door or in advance on (01384) 356 600 or 07941 906 069, or via envilestreetdramatic.org.uk website.

German market opens

ONE of the largest Christmas markets in the UK returns to Birmingham from today (Thursday).

The Frankfurt Christmas Market, centred on Victoria Square, begins its five week festive stay in the city centre.

It will be opened by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor Anne Underwood, who will also switch on the city's festive lights.

The Frankfurt Christmas Market – which celebrates its 18th year in the city – is organised by Birmingham City Council in partnership with Frankfurt Tourism and Congress GmBH, and sponsored by Fortem.

Concrete security barriers have been installed, following the attack on a Christmas market in Berlin last year. There will also be an increased police presence.

Sight-loss charity's lottery raises more than £150,000

A CHARITY for the blind and partially-sighted is celebrating after its lottery initiative, started 13 years ago, passed the £150,000 mark.

The funding for Beacon Centre for the Blind helps people in the Black Country with sight-loss.

Vikki Millichamp, communications and fundraising manager, said: "We

are incredibly grateful to the generous support from our local community."

The Beacon Centre is in Sedgley and provides support and advice to visually impaired people across the Black Country. That is an area with more than 36,000 people living with sight loss – and this figure is predicted to double to some 72,000 by 2050.

The lottery, called the Goalden Gate Superdraw, sees people pay

£1 per week. The profit goes to the charity. Vikki added: "The Goalden Gate Superdraw is a fantastic way to support our charity while being in with a chance of winning one of 60 cash prizes every week. They have 10 chances of winning and each week one lucky player wins the top prize of £1,000."

For more information call 01902 880 111 or visit beaconvision.org

Special brew for Darby monument

A BREWERY is raising money toward a project to create a monument in memory of a pioneer of the industrial revolution in Dudley.

Holden's Brewery in Woodsetton is bringing out a special beer with 10 per cent of sales being donated to the Abraham Darby First Project Fund.

The fund is behind a monument for the Woodsetton area in tribute to 17th century iron founder Darby. From a Woodsetton Quaker family, Darby developed a method of producing pig iron in a blast furnace fuelled by coke rather than charcoal, which fuelled the Industrial Revolution. His grandson commissioned the famous Iron Bridge in Shropshire. The label for the beer is being designed by borough artist Steve Field.

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Restoration of loco is steaming ahead

THE restoration of a steam locomotive, once based at Stourbridge, has taken a big step forward.

The locomotive No. 4150, a Great Western Railway 'Large Prairie' tank engine, was built at the GWR workshops in Swindon, but was based in Stourbridge for six years from the summer of 1947

Now it has had its boiler removed ready for overhaul and the installation of newly-fabricated tanks and bunker – in the hope of getting back into action on the Severn Valley heritage line.

During its time at Stourbridge, the engine worked passenger and goods trains to Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Stafford and Worcester, and along the Severn Valley line through Bewdley where the boiler lift took place.

Owners of the loco are The 4150 Fund, a group of hundreds of steam enthusiasts, many in the Stourbridge area who have bought shares in the engine.

Axed market will return run by new operators

A STREET market will return to Stourbridge after new operators were found.

Tudor Markets will bring stalls back to Stourbridge from March and a Christmas Market for the town by the firm which also runs Dudley Market.

The market closed in September after former bosses LSD said they could not continue to run it following a change in policy by Dudley Council, which they say amounted to a 850 per cent rise.

Natalie Mashhadi-Marshall, business developer for Tudor Markets, said: "We aim to give Stourbridge the best experience possible and we want to let people know that we will be bringing it back with an official launch in March.

Focal

"We are in the initial stages of planning but we know that having the market come back means the world to the people of Stourbridge. We want it to be the focal point of the town centre again."

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, licensing boss, said: "People have been coming to Stourbridge for a market for many years and we recognised the importance of doing everything we could to continue that popular tradition, especially in the lead up to Christmas.

"We will have a traditional market in the town as part of the Christmas light switch-on, and markets throughout the festive period."

Dead mouse is found in school kitchen

A PRIMARY school closed its kitchen after environmental health officers found a dead mouse and droppings.

The discovery was made at Priory Primary School in Dudley following a visit by the health team from Dudley Council. The kitchen was closed after the visit on November 3 but it was anticipated that it would re-open last Friday.

Jill Craig, headteacher, said: "I would like to reassure parents that we are taking the necessary action to address concerns raised by environmental health."

Councillor Peter Miller, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "We are working with the school, which is putting the necessary measures in place to resolve the issue as quickly as possible."

Pudsey pub aid

CRADLEY Heath pub The Waggon and Horses is holding a free admission event to raise money for Children in Need on Saturday, including barbecue and music, from 2pm.

£50k of illegal tobacco seized in police raids

AROUND £50,000 worth of illicit tobacco and cigarettes was seized – £20,000 of that from one shop – following a sting operation in Stourbridge.

The raids were carried out in a joint intelligence-led operation between Dudley trading standards and West Midlands Police.

Stourbridge Police tweeted on Friday: "Joint Operation with Trading Standards yesterday, £50,000 worth of illicit tobacco and cigarettes seized, over £20,000 worth of it from one shop in Stourbridge @FSU_WMP @StourbridgeWMP @myDudleyTSO @BWYK9."

The teams used sniffer dogs to help track down the illegal goods which were bagged up to be taken away at the end of the operation.

It comes in the latest of a series of raids across the Black Country, which earlier this month saw £70,000 worth of illegal tobacco seized from four shops in Sandwell. The businesses were targeted as part of the wider Safer 6 campaign.

Pub landlord tied up in armed raid

A 64-YEAR-OLD pub owner was tied up with wire and attacked during a robbery at a Lower Gornal pub.

Two masked men forced their way into the Black Bear pub in Deepdale. They pushed their way into the pub after the owner went to investigate a noise at the rear of the property.

One of the men is believed to have threatened the man with a gun, while the other was holding a scalpel-like instrument.

The man was badly assaulted, tied up with wire and put into a cabinet, before the men made off with cash in the raid which took place between 3am and 4am on Sunday.

It is also believed the men deliberately turned a gas hob on before their departure

Police are continuing to investigate and anyone with information is asking to call police on 101, quoting crime reference number 20DY/243750M/17.

Badgers stop play as pitch dug up



Badger bother – The Dell stadium

BADGERS have stopped play at a Black Country football club after digging up the pitch.

Dudley Town FC's home games last Saturday and Wednesday night were cancelled after the animals had chewed the turf at The Dell Stadium in Brierley Hill.

Officials declared the surface as unplayable, saying that the problem had been going on for the past 10 weeks.

Last Saturday's match against Hereford-based Wellington FC in the West Midlands League was called off after a 10am pitch inspection. The

same happened again with Malvern Town on Wednesday night.

Dudley Town chairman Stephen Austin, explained: "We have never experienced anything like this before. We have had problems with Canadian geese and foxes but we have lost our last games as a result of the damage it has caused.

"It's been ongoing for about 10 weeks but has progressively got worse. They are a protected species so there is little that we can do, but the council are working tirelessly.

"We have been trying to look for

other local places we can play but its not that easy. It is concerning that the games have been called off but we hope the matter will resolve itself."

Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of Dudley Council, said: "We are having problems with badgers, who are digging into the surface of the pitch at the Dell to get at earthworms and other insect larvae and causing damage. Badgers are a wild animal and as such are protected by law, but we are making every effort to protect the pitch, including strengthening and securing fencing."

Reckless pair's race cost young mother her life

DANGEROUS drivers who killed a young mother during a race at almost 80mph have been jailed for a total of 14 years.

Joseph Chance and Dylan Stringer have been locked up for the fatal crash which killed 19-year-old Nadine Foster.

Former Dudley College student Miss Foster, 18, was a front seat passenger in a Ford Focus, driven by boyfriend Stringer, when it hurtled into a bus shelter and wall in Hagley Road, Stourbridge.

The former Pedmore Technology College student died in hospital four days after last year's tragedy, leaving behind her then five-month-old son.

Sentencing the two at Wolverhampton Crown Court, Judge Michael Challinor condemned them for driving without insurance and licences after swigging alcohol.

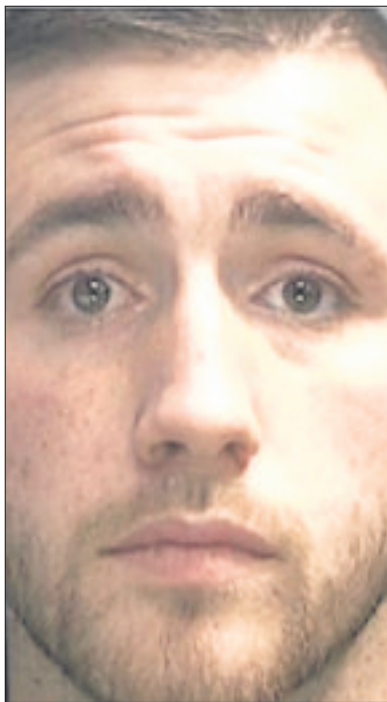
He handed Chance, 25, of Murcroft Road, Stourbridge, an eight-year prison term and jailed Stringer, of Wychbury Road, Stourbridge, for six years.

The judge said: "Long after you are released, the catastrophic effects of what you have done will continue to echo down the years for the family of Nadine Foster."

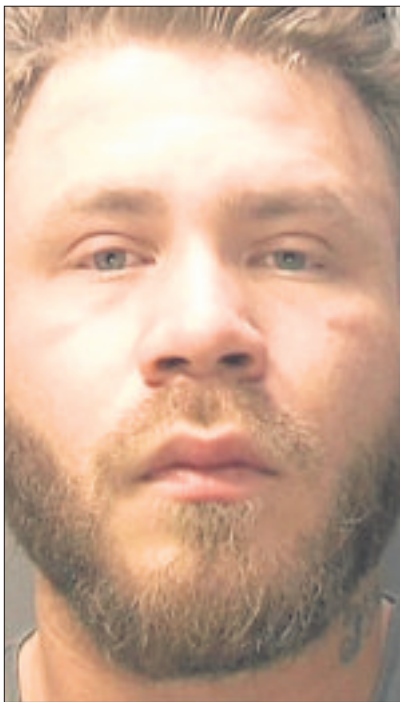
Chance previously admitted driving dangerously and denied



Nadine Foster – died aged 19



Dylan Stringer – put behind bars for 13 years



Joseph Chance – jailed for eight years

causing Miss Foster's death but was unanimously convicted by jurors last month, while Stringer pleaded guilty in January.

Jurors heard the men were with Miss Foster and Chance's ex-girlfriend in the Chicago Rock Cafe before leaving just after midnight on April 16, 2016.

Chance was driving his Renault Clio ahead of Stringer's car as they both flouted the 30mph speed limit and overtook another vehicle on Hagley Road. There were just two seconds between the cars as they reached 78mph before Stringer's vehicle crashed.

Stringer had lost control of his car when he swerved to avoid an oncoming vehicle as he tried to overtake a car. Chance had completed the same manoeuvre just moments before.

Witnesses described seeing the cars 'racing' immediately before the crash.

Chance was handed a 14-year driving ban and Stringer, 24, was disqualified from driving for 13 years.

Nadine was left with catastrophic injuries after the passenger side of Stringer's car, where hNadine was sitting, took the brunt of the crash.

Chance had blamed Nadine for distracting him by pinching his leg and causing the collision. He later refused to be interviewed.

Judge Challinor told the men they were equally culpable for the crash, with Chance setting the pace for a race.

Chance, 25, who had a provisional licence but no

insurance and MOT, was found guilty of death by dangerous driving. Stringer, 24, who had no licence, no insurance and no MOT, admitted death by dangerous driving.

DC Jamie Simon, said: from West Midlands Police's Collision Investigation Unit, said: "Chance and Stringer chose to race their vehicles at more than double the speed limit, having both consumed alcohol, at the time it was dark and it had been raining. They did this with a blatant disregard for the laws of the road

"Their reckless and stupid actions cost a young mother her life."

"Her son, who was five months old at the time, will know never get to know his mother."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tree and lights switch-on date

THE bosses of Dudley Market will be staging a Christmas lights switch-on in the town centre on December 2.

Tudor Markets will light up the stalls and a Christmas tree will be brought back into the market place.

There are 63 traders at the market now, six days a week.

Natalie Mashhadi-Marshall, business developer, said: "Things are going really well.

"There has been a huge increase in traders since we took it over and the council seem happy with us.

"We will also be bringing a Christmas tree back to the town centre, which we will sponsor, and will be having a light switch on December 2."

Report of dealing near to school

AN investigation has been launched after reports of drug dealing near a school.

Haybridge High School in Hagley confirmed that an incident took place outside of school hours and off the premises.

A spokesperson for the 1,276-pupil school said: "There is an ongoing school investigation, following correct procedure, and it would be inappropriate to comment further at this time.

"We would like to reassure all students, staff and parents/carers that the safety and wellbeing of our students remains our top priority."

Business award for dance school

A DANCE school run by 27-year-old Kennedy Glews has won Outstanding Business of the Year at the Midland Business and Community Charity Awards.

The University of Wolverhampton student won praise for her The Kennedy School of Dance.

Ms Glews, of Kingswinford, who has owned the school for four years, said: "I've owned the dance school for four years now and we have 150 students of all ages, teaching tap, acro and modern dance.

"I work with an amazing team and they all work very hard."

Chance to meet Green Duck brewer at pub

A WORDSLEY pub is holding a meet the brewer night.

Head brewer of Stourbridge's Green Duck Beer Company, Alex Hill, will be at the Lawnswood in Lawnswood Road tomorrow night (Friday).

He will be talking about the brewery and how its wide range of ales are made. There will be a chance to try four Green Duck beers including Winter Berry Stout.

Drop in for beer

PUNCHLINE Brewery is holding a tasting event on Saturday from 2pm at Unit 13, Stow Heath Industrial Estate, Wolverhampton.

Giant Snow Lion set to prowl centre



The giant animatronic white lion who will be at the centre with the Red Queen

A HUGE Snow Lion will greet shoppers at West Bromwich's New Square Shopping Centre next month.

Visiting from the Forests of Eternal Snow and accompanied by the Red Queen, whom he is charged to protect, the giant white lion will walk through New Square, as a mythical emblem of the season, celebrating the light of human kindness in the depths of winter's darkest days.

One of the largest animatronic creatures in the UK, measuring two metres high and five metres long, combines cutting-edge animatronic puppetry, sound effects and music with a breathtakingly realistic appearance.

It will be at the centre from 11am to 4pm on December 16. Meanwhile, Santa's Grotto will also be returning on November 25.

Shoplifter jailed after trying to stab guard

A THUG, who tried to stab a supermarket security guard barely a month after assaulting a shopkeeper, has been jailed for two years.

Ian Bartley drew a knife after being detained and held in a head lock by Colin Whitehouse while trying to flee on a push bike after stealing £98 worth of air fresheners from Asda in Wednesbury, a judge heard.

The 29-year-old shoplifter then warned 'I am going to stab you' and a witness later told police he saw Bartley miss with a swing of the knife towards the back of the security guard, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

Mr Whitehouse managed to grab hold of the arm holding the knife as up to five customers and passers-by rushed to help suppress the thief whose arm was reportedly broken in the ensuing struggle on September 10, continued Mr Howard Searle, prosecuting.

He was held until the arrival of police who had been looking for the defendant since August 1 when he attacked shopkeeper Kamraj Sangha. Mr Sangha was alerted by his staff as

By John Scott

Bartley left Sangha Stores in Church Street, Bilston without paying for nine jars of coffee valued at £31.

There was a scuffle as the defendant desperately tried to escape during which Mr Sangha felt a scratch to his arm after the thief produced a hypodermic needle, said Mr Searle.

Bartley managed to escape but dropped his wallet with ID as he fled while Mr Sangha went to hospital for tests which fortunately showed he had not been infected by the needle, the court heard.

Bartley from Ferradaye Street, Tipton, admitted two thefts, assault and possession of an offensive weapon.

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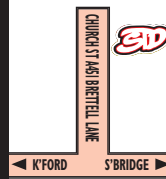
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MARGARET 42, busty chubby female. WLTm Muslim men, Pakistani, Kurdish or Indian welcome, daytime/evening, no strings. Text only replies. Mailbox: 5838907

AMANDA 36yrs, attractive lady. Solvent and well educated and spoken. Feminine figure with large breasts. Hoping to meet a broad-minded gent, any age for discreet relationship. I don't mind if you are married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box No: 429287

SARAH 35, recently divorced, slim 5ft 7ins, pretty, seeks male up to 50yrs for meals out hopefully leading to more. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429385

YAZ, Asian lady, 32yrs, very slim and pretty. Hoping to meet a strong minded, dominant, resourceful man. Mature please 45+ Text Only. Box: 4177148

JACKIE 40, slim easygoing blonde, works too hard, needs sincere male to help live up her free time. Look at status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429381

SOPHIE, 46yrs, attractive professional lady with time on her hands. Hoping to meet a nice gent of any age, text fun, flirt, possible meeting. Text Only. Box: 4125679

MANDY 36, size 10 but busty, open-minded and doesn't suffer fools, looking for relationship with nice guy for discreet relationship. Status unimportant. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429287

SARAH black lady, works as a nurse. 48yrs young, hoping to meet a younger man for some fun. Let me be your cougar and dress me up in my uniform. Text Only. Box: 4166063

TAMMY, sincere mature lady, easy-going animal lover. Loves travel, eating out etc. Call me if you are interested in a chat. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429333

MELANIE, attractive lady, 38yrs, hoping to meet a nice chap, any age, for chats, not complicated times. Must have great shoo, looks unimportant. Text Only. Box: 4037147

PAMELA, mature presentable lady, well educated, solvent, very young at heart. Hoping to meet presentable gent. Call me. Or text if you prefer. I promise to get back to you. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429329

I am a discreet married black lady who is hoping to meet a man of any colour for some daytime chats, maybe meet up, maybe just text to prolong the interest in our ways. Text Only. Box 4063856

TINA, 58yrs, slim, passionate and kind. Loves eating out. Hoping to meet gent 55-63. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429167

ATTRACTIVE widowed lady, 70yrs but looks much much younger. GSOH, fun loving. WLTm man 67+ for loving tender relationship. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429327

GEORGINA, 46yrs, sophisticated professional lady (teacher), quite firm but kind! Interested in finding out more? I am interested to chat to you so call me today. Text Only. Box: 4151593

LINDA, late 50s lady, promises to call you back if you text or call. She's attractive and waiting to meet you. You must be 40+ with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429325

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks no strings casual fun. I have my own house, car and am solvent. I'm busy with a firm figure. You must be open minded, age/status unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 3015 Box: 427633

RACHAEL, 44yrs, loves life, varied interests, GSOH, kind and attractive. Seeks similar male of any age. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429323

MARIELLE, 45yrs, curvy attractive lady, likes older men, I'm married so you must be discreet. Lets meet up, and make each other smile again. Call me and lets get to know each other. Tel: 0906 515 3039 Box: 426853

LISA, 50yrs, curvy honey blonde lady. Loves life. Hoping to meet a kind gent of any age. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429321

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673

FEMALE 67, smoker, enjoys music, TV, meals outin, looking for male 68-75 for friendship maybe more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 5877942

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

MANDY 36, size 10 but busty, open-minded and doesn't suffer fools, looking for relationship with nice guy for discreet relationship. Status unimportant. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429287

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, huggable figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365

SUE, 44, country loving lady, tall, slim, looking for similar country gent to share adventures in the great outdoors with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429251

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375

JANE, 47, confident full figured and all woman, likes cosy nights in with that special person, looking for friendship maybe more. Age/looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428905

SHARON, 48, tall slim attractive, lives alone with no ties, love romanticising and WLTm man for good times together, maybe more. Any age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429125

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 426205

ATTRACTIVE lady, 70yrs young, slim, fit and young for my age. I'm hoping to meet a kind gent, must have GSOH, age/looks unimportant. Must be smart and good company. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429039

CAROLINE, 42yrs, well educated, sophisticated "some call me posh" married lady, looking for no strings midweek liaisons. Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box 427533

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 425979

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CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 426851

ATTRACTIVE lady, 56yrs. Slim, brunette who loves life. I'm very passionate and loving. Call me if you are interested. I will reply to all calls and texts. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429043

ATTRACTIVE lady, late sixties, hoping to meet a nice chap for walking, wine dining, and much much more. Age unimportant ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429161

ATTRACTIVE widow, 70s, solvent, fit and still attractive GSOH, hoping to meet a nice gent for days out, possibly more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429159

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64 year old male, WLTm a lady between 60-75, for friendship and outings. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419929

TALL, dark, attractive Shropshire male, 57, WLTm an attractive female, for discreet daytime fun and excitement. Any age or status. Can travel. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429301

MIKE, male, 61, seeks black or Asian lady, any age for adult fun, maybe more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6010228

COLIN, 50, kind, loving, seeks kind loving, cuddly, large lady, 45-55, for LTR, love and romance. Must like hugs, kisses, cuddles and holding hands. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6091169

JEFF, 60s, tall, fit, young outlook, N/S, car owner, seeks similar lady for friendship, outings etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428175

ATTRACTIVE male, 56, 6ft, WLTm an attractive female, any age, for discreet fun and intimate times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428109

Hi I am a single Indian male in my 50s, and would like to meet a mature female 55+ for a NSA friendship. Text only replies. Box no: 4627019

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Tributes after sudden death of gardener, 27



Gardener Adam Greathead from Stourbridge was an inspiration to many with his skills and charity fundraising

ADAM Greathead was a natural gardener. He started his first allotment aged just 11 and began a business selling hanging baskets and plants at school.

His death aged 27 at his home on October 29 has shocked the community. An inquest is to be held. He was chairman of Wollaston Gardeners Guild, before that secretary of the West Midlands branch of the National Vegetable Society.

But he may be remembered for the gardens he created. One was a public garden called Duck's Pool in Stourbridge, which opened to raise money for charity. The other was John's Garden, the garden of Ashwood Nurseries owner John Massey, who appointed him as head gardener. An extension to that garden will be renamed Adam's Garden and will host charity events. The three-acre site behind the nurseries in Kingswinford, will open on February 10.

Promising

Mr Massey said: "There can be no doubt that Adam had the most promising future ahead of him and his death is the cruellest of blows, not only to me and the Ashwood team but to the world of horticulture. "We offer our deepest sympathy to his parents, John and Gay. Their loss is unimaginable."

Adam, who attended Hagley Catholic High School, was awarded the Princess Diana Memorial Award in 2005 for inspiring others. His funeral will take place at Our Lady and All Saints Catholic Church in New Road, Stourbridge, on November 30, at 11am.

Firm thrills as order book hits £30m mark

SOARING demand for a Kingswinford company's hi-tech theme park rides has boosted its order book to £30 million.

Orders have trebled this year at Simworx, on the Pen-snett Estate, as it comes up with rides like its Immersive Tunnel that uses a 360-degree 3D screen up to 70 metres long with 4D effects such as water sprays and bubbles.

This year it has created an F1 racing experience at the Ferrari Land theme park at PortAventura World, near Salou in Spain, and the Kung Fu Panda Ride at Motion Gate in Dubai.

Simworx is receiving orders from China, Russia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Mexico for its 4D/5D effects theatres, 3D audio visuals and immersive experiences. It already supplies its technologically advanced rides to Drayton Manor Theme Park in Staffordshire, also Thorpe Park, Paultons Park and Shrek's Adventure.

Simworx's latest orders include a flying theatre for Hanoi in Vietnam – a ride that lifts seated visitors into a huge dome screen and gives them the sensation that they are flying. It has

By Simon Penfold

an order from an Indonesian theme park called Trans Studios to create the world's first media-based water ride by adding 3D audio visuals to a water flume ride. Now Simworx has signed a £46m strategic co-operation agreement with a major theme park developer in China to build three new rides a year for the next four years.

Terry Monkton, managing director, said: "I am thrilled with the recent growth in the business and the quantity of new orders we are receiving from international markets."

A £4.5m funding boost from the British Growth Fund enabled it to double the size of its factory and recruit more staff.

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Young Arwen gets the royal stamp of approval



Making her mark – schoolgirl Arwen Wilson, aged nine, from Dudley, with Prince Charles and Ted Lewis-Clark, 10

A SCHOOLGIRL from Dudley met Prince Charles to mark her success in a Christmas stamp design contest.

Arwen Wilson, from Dudley, created the snow people scene which is to feature on the 2nd class stamp this festive season.

Arwen's artwork will be on millions of Christmas card envelopes.

The St Chad's Catholic Primary pupil entered the Royal Mail competition. Her entry was chosen by Prince Charles and approved by the Queen.

The nine-year-old met the heir to the throne and was presented with a framed copy of her stamp – Snow Family.

The 1st class stamp will use a design by fellow winner Ted Lewis-Clark from Somerset.

A special postmark will also feature. Each child will have their name on the postmark for a week this month. Arwen's postmark will feature on mail delivered from Tuesday this week.

She won £1,000 in vouchers and £1,000 for her school.



Arwen Wilson's winning



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16 One in ten 101 calls go unanswered

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, November 16, 2017

ONE in 10 calls to the non-emergency police helpline 101 are going unanswered, it has been revealed.

Ten per cent of callers trying to access help from West Midlands Police are hanging up because they are waiting too long. It has led to concerns that those whose calls are not answered are then ringing 999, piling pressure on emergency call handlers who have had to deal with a rise in calls compared to last year.

Calls to 999 rose by 12.5 per cent during 2017, with demand reaching an all-time high during June when each weekend broke previous records for calls during a 24-hour period. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services also criticised the force for 'abandoned calls' in their report released last week, stating their understanding of demand 'requires improvement' although efficiency was rated 'good' overall.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson admitted it was a challenging time for call handlers. He said: "I have focused on improving this area, so the public gets a quicker response to their calls.

"There is still much to do but the initial signs are encouraging.

"West Midlands Police has faced an extraordinary rise in demand that has placed huge pressures on the service."

Gig to get to know Howard well again

EIGHTIES pop star Howard Jones will perform in Birmingham later this month, with his Electric Band.

The Live Aid veteran plays the O2 Institute in Digbeth, on Saturday, November 25. Visit www.academymusicgroup.com/o2institutebirmingham for details. He has a 'best of' album out including hits Like To Get To Known You Well and What Is Love?

Bring back the Black Country speed cameras – police chief

Sue's Brazil adventure for charity



Sue Harris, aged 68, with her challenge medal after completing an epic cycle ride in Brazil – India is next

A 68-year-old cyclist is on cloud nine after pedalling 217 miles around Brazil in just five days.

Sue Harris, from Lye, was inspired to take on the challenge after she was stuck in bed with a broken ankle.

The only problem was she had not

been on a bike for more than 20 years. But the retired accounts worker refused to let that hold her back and after months of training jetted off to South America last month.

She successfully completed the ride, which included some mountains, rais-

ing £4,500 for Women V Cancer, which supports Breast Cancer Care, Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust and Ovarian Cancer Action.

"It was an absolutely amazing experience," said Mrs Harris, now planning a 450km ride in India next November.

SPEED cameras should return to the Black Country, a police chief has said as he praised their use in other parts of the West Midlands for reducing the number of road deaths.

Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson believes it is crucial working cameras are installed in Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell to ensure drivers stick to the speed limit. Speeds have fallen by 14 per cent on roads where average speed cameras have been rolled out in Birmingham and Solihull.

They were introduced in August 2016 as part of a 21-month trial and are now due to be brought in in Coventry.

Mr Jamieson said there was clear evidence the average speed cameras had made drivers slow down and says they should now be introduced in the Black Country.

Decision

It comes as it was revealed the number of deaths on the region's roads had fallen by nine per cent over the last 12 months.

A total of 706 people were killed in road collisions in the year to September. The decision to put up speed cameras must be made by councils rather than the police.

Mr Jamieson said: "When elected I promised to make our roads safer. I am proud that thanks to a concerted effort we are reducing the number of pedestrian deaths on our roads, compared to large national increases.

"A focus on cyclist safety and speed cameras in Birmingham and Solihull has contributed to this. Cameras are due to be installed in Coventry and I am hoping the roll-out will extend to the Black Country in the near future."

Show sparks paramedic job interest

MORE than 20,000 people showed an interest in a paramedic recruitment campaign.

Since the application opened on NHS Jobs, just over 21,000 people have viewed the West Midlands Ambulance job description and person specification documents.

There have been more than 450 applications, with another 850 still working on their online forms. Last December, a similar advert brought in 10,000 views and 28 applications.

Louise Harris, recruitment manager, said: "After the success of TV programmes like Ambulance on BBC One, 999 On The Frontline on More 4 and Inside the Ambulance on W Channel, the ambulance service, particularly in the West Midlands, has never been so high profile.

"There is no doubt we have seen a huge level of interest in the role of paramedic."

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WOLVERHAMPTON MAGAZINE

Police will share town centre council offices

DUDLEY'S police station is to close by the end of the year with officers moving into a new base in the town centre. The police station will relocate from New Street into Dudley Council offices in St James's Road. It brings to fruition cost-cutting plans by West Midlands Police to close and sell off the current station, which closed its front desk last year. In total, 13 police stations in the Black Country have closed or are to close as part of the move, saving the force £8.6 million.

Closer

Stations have already closed in Kingswinford and Stourbridge. The buildings, in Moss Grove and New Road, are now up for sale. Once the police team has moved out of the Dudley station it will also be put up for sale, confirmed the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson. He said: "I am pleased that we are retaining a base in Dudley town centre. By moving in with the council this will enable closer working on important issues to keep the people of Dudley safe." The move has been welcomed by Dudley Council leader, Councillor Patrick Harley.

Couple's diamond day is wunderbar



Albert and Inge Goodwin with a photo of their wedding day

THEY came from different countries but it was love at first sight for Albert Goodwin and his bride-to-be Ingeburg. She came to Britain as a teenager, initially to look after the children of her sister, Hilse, a war bride from Brunswick in Germany, who had married a Black Country soldier. Inge and Albert met at the Wordsley Gala in 1957 and married just four months later at Lye Church after a whirlwind romance. Now the couple, both 82, have celebrated 60 years of marriage. Mr Goodwin, a retired petro-chemical engineer, says they had got married quickly as least in part because her work permit was about to run out. Mr Goodwin said: "Her English was very good although I learned some German phrases when I went to meet her family." Inge became a British citizen 25 years ago. The couple, of Hawkswell Drive, Kingswinford, went on to have two daughters – Angela, now 59, and Heidi, 56 – and a son, Adrian, 53. They also have seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. The couple, members of Dudley Bowls Club, celebrated with family and friends.

Hit-and-run death: Man faces charge

A MAN has been charged in connection with a hit-and-run crash that claimed the life of a woman. Krishna Devi Droch was hit as she crossed Rookery Road, in Handsworth, Birmingham, at around 11am on November 9. The 62-year-old died at the scene after the crash near the junction with Soho Road. Darren Holness, aged 47, of Leonard Road, Handsworth, has been charged with perverting the course of justice in connection with the crash. He was due to appear before Birmingham magistrates this week. Three other people were arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving and have since been released pending further investigation. Officers believe three cars were involved and are continuing to appeal for witnesses to contact them. Police say the vehicles were a Vauxhall Zafira, a Corsa and a Mondeo.

Sixth form college is no longer rated 'outstanding'

A PRESTIGIOUS Black Country sixth form college has lost its 'outstanding' rating following an inspection by the education watchdog. King Edward VI in Stourbridge was downgraded from 'outstanding' to 'good' by Ofsted after an inspection on October 3. But the college was praised by inspectors for its 'high ambitions

for students who arrive promptly and readily to learn". The report highlighted how 'too many of the most able students did not achieve the grades they were capable of, despite the actions of leaders and managers'. It also stated: "Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and a very strong understanding of the requirements of the A-level course and assessments."

"Teachers prepare students well for the examinations, support students well to develop independent learning skills. Students have the confidence and skills to learn effectively inside the classroom and are well prepared for higher education. "Senior managers do not provide sufficient support for students who wish to progress directly into employment and training."

Alert over 'charity' collectors in traffic

MOTORISTS are being warned against giving money to unlicensed 'charity' collectors stopping traffic in the Black Country. It comes after people dressed in superhero and monkey costumes were seen stopping cars at busy junctions in Oldbury, Tipton and Dudley. They are claiming to be collecting for Children In Need. But Dudley and Sandwell councils say they do not have a street permit to collect money for charity in the boroughs. Legitimate Children In Need collectors would have a permit, the councils adds. The collectors have been seen at Birchley Island in Oldbury, at the junction of Dudley Port and Sedgley Road East in Tipton and at the Burnt Tree junction

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Five more masters from Dudley and Stourbridge

100
MASTERS

FIVE talented craftsmen and women from Dudley and Stourbridge have now been named in the hunt to find the 100 most talented and skilled Masters from the Black Country.

Creative Black Country, which set out to identify the 100 Masters, is trickling out the names of those who made the list and the latest batch includes some of the borough's favourite sons and daughters.

The public were asked to name people they know who are 'brilliant at what they do'. Hundreds of nominations were submitted for the June 30 deadline and now the 100 Masters list has been compiled.

Musician

All 100 masters will feature in a supplement in our sister paper the Express & Star soon. And many masters will appear at a special Festival of Masters event at Starworks in Wolverhampton on November 24.

Among those recently names is musician Clint Mansell. From bouncing around the Civic Hall stage to writing scores for some of the biggest Hollywood blockbusters; the former frontman of Stourbridge band Pop Will Eat Itself has certainly had a diverse musical career. On meeting director Darren Aronofsky over two decades ago in New York the pair started a working partnership. With around 60 scores



Stourbridge author SJ (Steve) Watson

under his musical belt, the composer's soundtracks can be heard on Oscar-nominated films like Black Swan and The Wrestler, Noah and Stoker.

Also on the list is author SJ Watson who started a writing course as a hobby, only for his novel to be picked up by Richard & Judy's book club and then turned in to a movie starring Nicole Kidman and Colin Firth.

Stourbridge-born author Steve Watson's debut novel Before I Go To Sleep was a best seller and won lots of accolades. He released his second novel Second Life in 2015.

Stourbridge-born scientist Kay Davies who has dedicated her career to finding a cure for muscular dystrophy and researching into the debilitating condition has been named as a master.

For mastering bus driving and fundraising, Stourbridge's Dave Gerrard



Hollywood composer Clint Mansell

has been a bus driver for over 50 years and every year he coordinates events to raise money for Russells Hall Hospital, the Royal British Legion, Macmillan Nurses and many others.

He has so far raised over £22,000 for charity in 15 years.

Dudley-born Liz Griffiths is named as a master for her set decoration. Liz has used her creative skills over the last 25 years to interpret scripts for film and TV and bring them to life in some of the most recognisable shows.

Her projects have included producing sets for Doctor Who, Hot Fuzz, Shaun of the Dead, as well as designing for the Hollywood big league with The Mummy and The Conjuring 2.

For details of all masters named to date visit www.100masters.co.uk website.

SHOULDER OF MUTTON SCOOPS HALESOWEN PUB OF THE YEAR AWARD

Recently the Halesowen Chronicle ran the pub of the year competition. The voting process was down to the readers where they had to vote for their favourite pub.

After many entries the winner this year was the Shoulder of Mutton which has been managed by Paul Warwick for the past 2 years.

Paul said 'We are very proud of what we have achieved at the 'Shoulder' we have really turned this pub around. Offering our customers 10p back in every £1 spent, serving good real ales and entertaining our customers with live acts the weekends. We are a good example of a good real ale pub! We show all live sports from football, cricket to boxing showcasing all major live events'.



Paul was presented with the Pub Of The Year award from the Halesowen entertainment representative Sarah Childs.

The Shoulder Of Mutton is located on Birmingham Road, Blackheath, Rowley Regis B65 0HS so get yourself down to the Halesowen Chronicle Pub Of The Year and enjoy a pint of real ale !!

Riders are still Bound for Glory

Black Star Riders, Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton
THREE and a half decades ago, Phil Lynott finally called it a day on what was arguably one of the most influential hard rock bands in existence, Thin Lizzy.

If only he could see his legacy now: Black Star Riders, with Lizzy's guitar hero captain at the helm, Scott Gorham, who, alongside the incredibly charismatic Ricky Warwick on vocals, blasted a Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall audience into oblivion with a superb set of awesome tunes and masterful musicianship, the like of which Phil would have loved.

Following on from a raft of support bands, keeping the roadies extremely busy - probably the best of which was up-and-coming rock radio darlings Tax The Heat with their stylish swagger - the Riders took to the stage and rattled through a handful of tunes, leaving the Wulfrun faithful, mostly of a certain age, trying to catch their breath.

It was soon apparent the band which had evolved from a touring version of Lizzy, is now very much established as an indelible imprint on today's rock scene.

Riders' classics - which is quite an achievement after just five years in existence - were rattled through, in a set full of light and shade, lasting well over 90 minutes, from the anthemic Finest Hour and Bloodshot, to the flighty Dancing With The Wrong Girl, it was a treat.

GRAEME ANDREW



A scene from the show showing Carole (Bronte Barbe) in the recording studio

Beautiful is just that in so many different ways

Beautiful, Birmingham Hippodrome
IT'S simply called Beautiful - but the musical about Carole King could just as easily have had the words brilliant, breathtaking, blessed or brave in the title.

The show at Birmingham's Hippodrome featuring the American singer/songwriter brought home the full breadth and impact of her career. There may be plenty of B words on the list to describe her but when it comes to talent she is strictly A-list.

The production covers King's life from a 16-year-old classical music student up to her seminal album Tapestry which was released in 1971. In those 13 years she met and married songwriter Gerry Goffin and had two children, the first while still a teenager struggling to make it in the piranha pool of showbiz.

King sold her first song It Might as Well Rain Until September to New York impresario Donnie Kirshner while still a teenager. That was followed over the years by 100 hit singles which have been recorded by more than 1,000 artists. The show tells how

THEATRE REVIEWS

By Tony Attwater

she and Goffin were signed to Kirshner's songwriting factory. They were spurred on by their rivalry with another duo, Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, who were a major force in their own right.

Bronte Barbe played King and you couldn't fault her acting or singing. You could see why Kane Oliver Parry as Gerry won her heart and Amy Ellen Richardson and Matthew Gonsalves were convincing and funny as their friends and rivals.

The script was smooth and unforced while the set shifted effortlessly - one moment in an office then suddenly The Drifters or Righteous Brothers would be in full show mode. It closed of course with Beautiful off Tapestry which earned a standing ovation.

Beautiful will be back at the Hippodrome from January 31 to February 3 and at Wolverhampton Grand from June 12 to 16.

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Reports of hate crimes rise by nearly 30pc – in a year

REPORTS of hate crimes across the West Midlands rose by nearly 30 per cent during the last financial year, police chiefs have revealed. Around 4,000 attacks were reported during 2016/17 – a rise of 29 per cent compared to 12 months earlier.

West Midlands Police Assistant Chief Constable, Alex Murray, said the force witnessed more hate crimes in the wake of terror attacks and during summer months. He added that only around one-in-five incidents reported led to a conviction, but that the force had a 90 per cent conviction rate when it had enough evidence to bring charges.

Flu fear – no free jab for police

POLICE officers and staff in the West Midlands will not be offered the flu jab, despite fears of a possible epidemic this winter.

Chief Constable Dave Thompson said vaccinating staff had not had a major impact in the past.

Hospital staff across the Black Country are being encouraged to get the jab in a bid to ensure the workforce is not struck down by illness over the winter.

Mr Thompson responded to a question from Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson at the latest Strategic Police and Crime Board meeting, who asked if there would be a 'three-line whip' forcing staff to get the jab. But Mr Thompson said: "Uptake was variable. The return on the investment in terms of the impact was not substantial."

A hate crime is defined as any criminal offence motivated by hostility or prejudice because of the victim's religion, race, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, or gender.

Mr Murray said it was likely that the data only scratched the surface of what was really happening across the West Midlands.

Concern

He said: "Hate crime is highly under-reported – 90 per cent of disability hate crime is never reported, which gives us significant cause for concern. When we charge someone we get a guilty," he added.

"After each terror incident we see a spike in hate crime – and then it goes back down again."

Police and Crime Commissioner, David Jamieson, insisted that the force would continue to take a tough stance on hate crime.

He said: "We are all extremely proud that the West Midlands is a diverse region, where people from different backgrounds and cultures get on. That will not be allowed to change."

"Hate crime is not acceptable and tackling the crime is a priority of mine and West Midlands Police."

Ex-PM Brown makes point over Brexit



Former Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown at the launch of his new book at West Bromwich Town Hall

GORDON Brown says Brexit voters in the West Midlands will face a 'crunch moment' next year when they realise that voting to leave the EU was a mistake.

The former Labour Prime Minister says he believes that by next summer many people will see that promises over immigration and finances made by the Leave campaign have 'not been delivered'.

He said it was up to pro-Europe campaigners to put forward a 'game changer' of an argument to remain in the bloc, before launching a potential push for a second referendum.

Speaking at an event at West Bromwich Town Hall to promote his book, *My Life, Our Times*, Mr Brown said: "We will come to a crunch moment which I believe will be next summer. People will realise – those who voted

Leave – that what was promised to them has not been delivered. We have got to explain to people that there is an alternative way of answering their fears."

"You have got to wait and see how they react to the negotiations and then you have got to put an alternative view forward. That is the point where you have got to make a decision on a second referendum."

Ex anti-terror boss in court over papers

AN ex-counter terrorism boss in the West Midlands is to appear in court after sensitive documents were stolen from his unmarked police car.

Assistant Chief Constable Marcus Beale has been suspended and faces allegations that he breached the Official Secrets Act by failing to protect the secret files.

He has been summonsed to West-minster Magistrates' Court on December 7 where he will be charged. The classified papers were stolen from his car in May from a locked box believed to be in the boot. Personal items were also taken.

Appropriate

Due to the nature of the documents lost, the Metropolitan Police Service (Met) was asked by West Midlands Police to undertake an independent investigation.

Scotland Yard's Specialist Operations Directorate has national responsibilities in relation to offences under the Official Secrets Act and it was deemed more appropriate for an outside force independent of the officer to investigate, West Midlands Police said.

Mr Beale, a former senior officer in Staffordshire, had led the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit for several years.

A pantomime hero 'maid' in England

A COMEDY look at an English hero is on offer at a panto with a difference in Stourbridge next month. Robin Hood and his Merry Maids by the Comedy Theatre Group is being staged at Gig Mill Church Hall in Witton Street on December 15 and 16. Tickets £3 from Fair and Square, Market Street, or call 07954692593.

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The hotel is the ideal base to explore all the attractions



The restaurant's food is high quality



The hotel has several restaurants, including Fiamma

Finding an oasis of nature in heart of city

ON HOLIDAY

Report by Tania Taylor

I IMAGINE that most people's requirements for an enjoyable city break will be similar to mine – a central base close to local transport, good bars and restaurants, with plenty to see and do on your doorstep. That's not asking too much is it?

My partner and I packed our bags for a midweek break to the capital with absolutely no plans, just as a getaway from the normal routine of everyday life.

We stayed at the London Hilton Metropole in the heart of central London, a great location and straightforward to get to from the Midlands.

The journey took us just under three hours by car – plus they have onsite parking which for us is a must, and conveniently is outside any of the city's Congestion Charge zones.

Landmarks

Of course London is a huge city crammed with an abundance of things to see and do.

All the top attractions and landmarks are easily accessible, just a hop skip and jump on one of those big red buses or on the Tube – the Metropole is opposite Edgware Road underground station – or lose yourself wandering the streets admiring the eclectic mix of old and new architecture, which makes you wonder how do they fit it all in?

We explored the local area on foot and stumbled across a canal basin with a floating park, neatly tucked away around the corner from the hotel. With open lawns and seating, raised beds, and a small reserve to encourage wildfowl – a little oasis of nature nestled between the towering concrete buildings.



London Hilton Metropole is located in the heart of Central London, a great location and straightforward to get to

I've since learnt it was designed by Royal Horticultural Society gold medalist Tony Woods, who once described it as "truly one of a kind".

I can't argue with that, it's certainly like nothing I've seen before, quite simply, charming.

Overwhelmed by the choice of eateries and undecided on what we fancied, one evening we dined at the hotel's Fiamma restaurant.

Whatever cuisine tickles your tastebuds,

you won't be disappointed with the menu which offers a pleasing choice of international cuisine with a hint of the Mediterranean – I recommend the lobster and tiger prawn risotto, and we both fell in love with the trio of Italian desserts – delicious!

After a relaxing walk through Hyde Park, we felt brave enough to join the masses on the busy pavements of Regent Street, popping into Liberty London and Hamleys, then on to Leicester Square to rest our worn-out feet in a bar with a

cheeky afternoon beer.

I don't need to tell you what's a must-see or do – the list would be endless.

Whether you are visiting the capital to catch a show, sightsee, shop – or just want to go where the mood takes you, you will never be stuck for things to do.

I do, however, recommend a stroll through one of the city's great parks or gardens if you need a little breather from the hustle and bustle – just don't forget your umbrella... oops!

Luxurious cottages are home away from home

Report by Rachael Harrison

IF an Englishman's home is his castle this Englishwoman's home is a converted barn with a log burner.

So, for me, a stay at Tottergill Farm Cottages in the peaceful Cumbrian countryside was a real treat.

Tottergill Farm pre-sides over Castle Carrock from its perch on the Pennines.

It's holiday lets provide a welcome retreat, a base for exploration, and a vantage point over the Solway Plain, and the Lakeland and Scottish hills.

We spent two fabulous two nights at the private 46-acre estate.

It is attention to detail that sets these cottages apart. Each is beautifully styled and finished to a very high standard.

And I'm pretty picky.

Eight out of the 10 are also pet-friendly. Another big tick in the box for this traveller.

Our selection was Tower Barn, which sleeps up to six people and is part of a handsome Grade II-listed building.

Highlights are a second floor viewing gallery at the top of its tower and a glass fronted dining room and Juliet balcony on the first floor providing heart-warming views of fields and a reservoir.

Step out the back door on this level and you fall into a pristine garden overlooked by sheep-studded hills and trees full of birds.

Here you'll also find a spacious hot tub.

The cosy lounge has a wood-burning stove and flat screen TV.

There is a also a Blu-ray player and free wi-fi.

Across the way, a welcome tray in the kitchen filled with cake and locally-made fudge was a great surprise, easing us into holiday mode quickly.

But treats, style and mod-cons apart, nothing compares to waking up to absolute silence, aside from wind across window panes and the occasional bird call.

After our first night spent gathering food and drink supplies from nearby Penrith, a dip in the tub and then snoozing by the log burner, we decided to make the most of the sunshine and explore.

There is plenty in the area to keep guests occupied – if they can drag themselves away from their cottage – and we headed to Lowther Castle.

We had planned to "pop by for an hour or two" and ended up staying for four – I simply can't praise it enough.

The castle sits on a majestic elevated spot a few miles south of Penrith.

Surrounded by acres of woodland and ancient gardens, the ruined building is a stunning place to visit. Young, old and four-legged – everyone is welcome.

The castle was closed to the public for more than 70 years before becoming subject to a huge and ambitious renovation project in 2011.

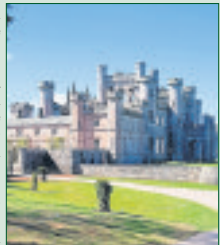
And what a renovation. From a modern and stylish cafe where old meets new, to the manicured lawns and fairytale ruins, it is a real hidden gem.

If you have children, or are a child at heart, the enchanting Lost Castle is a must – a huge wooden playground with all manner of climbing and hiding places, swings, slides and zip-lines surrounded by woodland.

On the way back to the cafe for lunch we wandered round the enchanting Jack Croft's Pond and marvelled at original garden buildings dating back centuries, broad lawns and wilder areas.

For an evening meal we'd recommend the Duke of Cumberland Inn. Just a mile or so away from your front door, it has all the trappings of a country pub with great service and charm.

And then back to my "castle" for a soak in the hot tub underneath a starry night sky.



High criticism for airport's pick-up parking charges



Birmingham Airport has been criticised

BIRMINGHAM Airport is among those criticised in a report for charging people for picking up loved-ones after flights.

Motorists collecting family or friends from London Luton are charged the most in the UK at £7 for 40 minutes, according to the report.

This is followed by London Stansted at £5 for half an hour and Birmingham at £4.90 for one hour.

London Stansted demands the highest fee for dropping off passengers at £3.50 for 10 minutes, 50p more than the amount charged by London Luton for the same time.

Liverpool John Lennon is the third

most expensive for so-called kiss and fly journeys at £3 for 20 minutes, although a secondary drop-off area involving a walk of five to 10 minutes is free.

Seven airports buck the trend by offering free drop-off parking by terminals.

They are London Heathrow, London Gatwick, London City, Cardiff, Manchester, Belfast City and Jersey.

Eye-watering

RAC spokesman Simon Williams said the charges were "eye watering".

He said: "Drop-off charges are the biggest bone of contention.

"For many they appear severe when they are simply pulling up for less than five minutes.

"Often they don't even get out of the car themselves."

A spokesman for trade association the Airport Operators Association said income from parking supports investment in facilities and "allows airports to keep charges to airlines low, benefiting travellers through lower air fares".

He said airports provide clear information about the cost of parking options, meaning passengers have a "high level of awareness of the different ways they can choose to get to the airport, ranging from public transport to travelling by car".

The spokesman added that airports set drop-off charges for a variety of reasons, including to manage congestion and limit the environmental impact of journeys.

Sandwell workplace injuries higher than national average

WORKPLACE injuries happen in Sandwell at a rate far above the British average, new figures reveal. 494 injuries for every 100,000 workers in the area were reported to the Health and Safety Executive in 2016/17.

In Britain overall, 263 injuries were reported for every 100,000 workers in 2016/17. Sandwell ranks 15th out of 381 local authorities for workplace injuries. A spokesman said the higher amount of injuries may correlate to the 'prevalence of high-risk industries locally'.

Councillor hits out at fly-tipper

A COUNCILLOR has branded an incident of fly-tipping 'disgraceful' after rubbish including tyres were dumped on a road.

Elaine Costigan appealed for information about the waste, which was left behind on New Street in Wednesbury on Tuesday, adding the incident was 'unacceptable'.

The Wednesbury North Councillor warned Sandwell Council was looking into the incident, but expected the rubbish to be cleaned up within 24 hours. She said: "It is just not acceptable. Fly-tipping posters will be going up and the rubbish will be collected within 24 hours. If anyone sees any incidents of fly-tipping, please report it."

Pictures of the scene show piles of tyres, a kitchen unit and tree branches sprawled on the pavement.

Brett Dixon, president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) a national not-for-profit group which represents people suffering needless injuries, added: "The good news is that no workers were killed in the area and there has been a national long-term downward trend in the rate of both injuries and deaths in workplaces. Our concern is that safeguards which protect workers are not unravelled by the Brexit process."

Workplace deaths in Britain have fallen by 85 per cent since the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act in 1974.

"Health and safety legislation and subsequent case law have been huge players in making our workplaces safer, and much of that has its roots in Europe," said Mr Dixon.

"The Government has the power to pick out what is needed and dispense with what is not when EU laws are converted into UK laws under the Repeal Bill. This process needs the most vigorous parliamentary scrutiny so that the laws which protect workers are not unravelled."

"Let's hope that next year we're looking at figures which show a reduction in workplace injury in Sandwell, and that everyone who goes out to work returns home," Mr Dixon added.

Do you fancy a night in the cells sir?



Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson and West Midlands Chief Constable Dave Thompson

MOST people hope to never end up in a police cell – but crime chiefs are hoping to recruit volunteers to spend time behind bars.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) David Jamieson is looking to recruit people from Wolverhampton and Oldbury to visit the force's custody suite.

Custody visitors are a team of people who ensure that people kept in the cells are being treated properly

and fairly. The PCC says the scheme is running well but requires more volunteers to look at cells in Wolverhampton, Oldbury, Perry Barr and Coventry.

Mr Jamieson said: "Custody visiting is very much an unsung community service, which safeguards both the detainee and the police. It's also a highly responsible role."

The scheme was introduced after the 1981 Brixton riots, with the aim

of increasing public confidence in the police, providing transparency into what happens in police stations and making sure that suspects' treatment is appropriate.

To qualify, volunteers should be over 18 years old, of good character and have no police or legal links.

Each year nearly 100 volunteers make over 2,500 visits to detainees.

Go to www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/your-com-missioner/custodyvisiting

Stars from films and TV at Comic Con

A STAR-STUDED line-up of special guests will be ready to meet fans at this year's Birmingham Comic Con.

Star Wars icon Anthony Daniels, Doctor Who star Pearl Mackie and Game of Thrones and Harry Potter actor David Bradley are among those set to appear.

Anthony Daniels is best known for playing the part of C-3PO in Star Wars. He is the only actor to have appeared in all of the major films in the series, as well as its many spin-offs. Pearl Mackie, meanwhile, played the role of Bill Potts, the 12th Doctor's companion.

David Bradley is best known for portraying Argus Filch in the Harry Potter film series, as well as Walder Frey in Game Of Thrones.

The NEC event, running from November 18 to 19, will also star actor Keith Allen and Pokemon voiceover star Veronica Taylor.

They will be joined by fellow stars from the likes of Walking Dead, Star Trek: The Next Generation, actress Denise Crosby, Dr Who actor and musical comedian Bernard Cribbins, Star Wars: Rogue One actor Guy Henry and Primeval and Wireless star Andrew Lee Potts.

Former Doctor Peter Davison will be among several stars appearing in the memorabilia area.

Brum family wins new cooking show

A FAMILY from Birmingham has been announced as the winners of new BBC show The Big Family Cooking Showdown.

The Gangotri family – made up of 42-year-old Bobby, her sister 41-year-old Lorna and 33-year-old sister-in-law Monica – grew up on home-cooked traditional fare.

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Alien-like discoveries can be found in the garden

FROM “alien” fungi and zombie bees to frightening-looking foods, the Royal Horticultural Society is aware of some more unusual finds you may come across if you’re foraging in gardens and woods this autumn.

Here’s what to look out for...
SWEETCORN SMUT
Sweetcorn will have a rude awakening if smut invades (pictured top).

Smuts are fungal diseases that can affect leaves, stems, flowers and sometimes storage organs, such as bulbs and corms.

In the case of sweetcorn, affected plants are often stunted and distorted and feature grey and swollen kernels that burst to release huge numbers of black spores.

Although considered a delicacy in some countries, including Mexico, in most cases affected plants should be destroyed and the soil rested from that particular plant type for several years. Resistant cultivars are also available to keep sweetcorn fans happy.



WEIRD PODS
Dramatic pods resembling exotic-looking cones that open to reveal blood-red berries are actually sheltering magnolia seeds. Bursting months after the lovely bowl-shaped white, pink, red, purple or yellow flowers, gardeners can be startled to find these sinister “growths” on their beloved magnolia trees and bushes at leaf fall.

EARTHSTARS (GEASTRUM TRIPLEX)
Kicking up leaves this autumn? You might find these strange flower-like fungi which grow on dead organic matter, and are often found in the leaf litter beneath conifers and deciduous trees. These fascinating fruiting bodies emerge during autumn when their bulbous outer casing folds out like the petals of a flower, creating a star effect.

There are 18 species of earthstars in the UK, with the collared earthstar the most common and bearing a distinctive crack near its centre, which gives the appearance of a collar around the spore sac. When rain or wind disturbs the earthstar, spores are released through an opening at the top.

WRIGGLING PUPA

Pupa is the stage between the larva and adult of many insects. Some species of moth pupa are often found in soil when tidying up the garden. These brown cylinders, from 1cm to over 2cm in length, pointed at one end and ribbed, can wriggle when touched.

They will emerge as adult moths come spring. Either return them to the soil or place them in a jar to observe the moths. While the caterpillars can cause some damage to plants, moths are important pollinators and caterpillars are food for birds and other wildlife.

ZOMBIE BUMBLEBEES

It is common for only bumblebee queens to survive the winter. To do this they seek a sheltered place and enter a state of torpor to survive the winter months, avoiding predation, starvation and disease. Typically the queens bury themselves in well-drained soil on north facing banks, reducing the likelihood of winter sun warming the soil and waking them up. In gardens, compost heaps and potted plants can meet these requirements.

Inevitably, gardeners sometimes disturb overwintering queens. If this happens and the bee remains docile, loosely cover her up again, so she can dig her way out in the spring. If the bee is very active help her on her way by feeding her a sugar solution.

KIPPERED CARROTS

Some pretty strange-shaped root veg come out of the ground at this time of year. Indeed, carrots can appear to have fangs, be split, curled, inter-twined or best of all “kippered” – opened out and flattened like a kipper (pictured bottom).

Much damage, especially kippering, is down to a virus infection, but other distortion is due to damage to the tender tip of the young root because of contact with stones, damage from hoeing or weeding, or by microscopic worms called root-knot nematodes (there are many forms of nematode).

Weird carrots, although unsightly to some, can of course still be eaten.



Spray foaming the outside of the house can cut energy bills and your carbon footprint

Cut your home’s global footprint

HOUSEHOLDERS must do more to cut their global footprint after last week’s figures showed that carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere are the highest for 800,000 years, warns a Midlands green energy expert.

Ron Fox, of Noreus Ltd, said statistics from the World Meteorological Organization showing the concentration of greenhouse gases at 45 per cent higher than pre-industrial levels should set the alarm bells ringing.

This was despite reports earlier this year from scientists who said that computer models showed the planet had warmed more slowly than previously predicted and that Britain had had its greenest summer ever with almost 52 per cent of electricity generated by either nuclear or renewable forms of power.

Ron said the increase was not all mankind’s fault as it was partly due to the El Niño weather phenomenon, which happens every two years and causes droughts which leads to less carbon being taken out of the atmosphere by plants and trees.

Although next year’s figures will be better he warned that the carbon dioxide stays in the atmosphere for centuries and it will make it harder for countries to limit warming of the earth to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels which the UK agreed to at last year’s Paris agreement on climate change.

But he added: “With homes producing more than a quarter of the UK’s carbon emissions, it is more important than ever for householders to reduce their carbon footprint.”

Ron, www.noreus.co.uk, said residents could take simple steps and even small changes could make a big difference. These include:

- * Switch from fossil fuels to green renewable energy and use solar panels and a thermodynamic solar heating system.

- * Insulate and draught-proof your home: Around seven million properties in the UK with solid walls have little or no insulation. Spray foaming

the loft, inside walls and the outside walls can also cut bills by up to 45 per cent and reduce the energy needed for heating.

- * Lighting: Turn off lights when not in use and replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent or LED ones.

- * Buy energy efficient appliances when replacing a washing machine, dishwasher or fridge freezer.

- * Don’t set the thermostat too high and turn off the heating or air conditioning when not at home.

- * Reduce use of coal fires or wood stoves.

- * At night close doors, blinds and curtains. But during the day keep internal doors and curtains open to allow warm air from free solar heat to circulate around the home.

- * Don’t have a window open when the heating is on.

- * Use the immersion heater sparingly.

- * Don’t leave computers and TVs on standby when not being used.

Pick perfect Christmas present for gardeners

Report by Hannah Stephenson

IF you have a friend or relative who loves nothing more than pottering around in the garden or helping things grow, there’s a plethora of gifts out there this Christmas with their name on.

From quirky nesters to dinky tins, tools and shed tidies, here are six of our top picks...

TEAPOT NESTER, £16.99 (suttons.co.uk)
Anyone for a cuppa? Small birds can make better use of this quirky nesting site – a teapot made from weather resistant ceramic, which is easy to install in any garden and should attract a variety of small birds.

HOZELOCK AQUADECO WATERING GLOBES, £8.37 for a pack of three (andysemporium.co.uk)

If they find watering pots a chore, help make it easy for them with some stylish handmade Hozelock AquaDeco Watering Globes. Fill these water, then turn upside down in the pot, and just the right amount will be released as required.

BURGON & BALL FLORA AND FAUNA INDOOR WATERING CAN, £16.99 (burgonandball.com)

However, if they do enjoy watering by hand, how about giving them something pretty to get the job done with? This gorgeous watering can from Burgon & Ball is bound to brighten up even dreary days - and there’s a host of other matching accessories, if you’re feeling generous.

BOSCH EASYCUT 12 CORDLESS NANOBLADE SAW, £130 (bosch-do-it.com)

This all-purpose compact, cordless multi-saw was a finalist in this year’s RHS Chelsea Garden Product of the Year. It has a lithium-ion battery but is lightweight, operates with minimal vibration, and can cut through branches and wood. Ideal for all those pruning tasks.

GARDEN MARKET VEGETABLE KIT, £15, Wyevale Garden Centres (in store only; wyevalegardencentres.co.uk)

The perfect gift for a green-fingered friend, this ‘grow your own’ vegetable kit comes complete with all the essentials for starting a veggie plot from scratch, including gloves, tools, seeds, compost and twine.

HOZELOCK SEASONS 15M SPIRAL HOSE SET, £29.99 (very.co.uk)

This colourful little hosepipe is ideal for small-scale urban gardeners, or those who just have a patio to tend to, as it stretches from 1m to 15m in length and retracts again for easy storage. The nozzle also has five spray patterns for gardening and cleaning tasks. Available in lime green, pink or purple.

STAYHOLD SUPER PACK CAR BOOT ORGANISER, £24.99 (robertdyas.co.uk)

Ever loaded your car boot with plants - only to find, once you’ve got home, that they’ve toppled and scattered soil every-



The EasyCut 12 NanoBlade Saw has attracted rave reviews among industry experts



Rutland boots are said to be ‘supremely comfortable’

where? This innovative system from Velcro, which enables you to fix pots into place, will make those pesky spillages a thing of the past.

HEYLAND & WHITTLE CANDLE IN A CAN, £15 (heylandandwhittle.co.uk)

Everybody loves a candle – and this new ‘Scentational’ range from Heyland & Whittle features unusual fragrances guaranteed to appeal to the gardening brigade.

BURGON & BALL HANG IT PEGBOARD, £22.99 (burgonandball.com)

If they like to be organised, and hate los-

ing time searching for those little gardening essentials such as twine, scissors and small hand tools, why not treat them to this nifty metal peg board? Comes complete with fixings and eight hooks for hanging.

RUTLAND NEOPRENE LINED WELLINGTON BOOTS, £79.99 (townandco.com)

A cut above the rest, the 4mm-thick neoprene lining covers the whole of the inside of the boot, including the insole area, making them supremely comfortable, while a concertina-style gusset on the inside and contoured design provides an adjustable



A spiral hose is ideal for small-scale gardens

fit. There’s also a steel shank for added strength in the sole.

FELCO MODEL 2 ORIGINAL SECA-TEURS, £44 (worldoffelco.co.uk)

Every gardener loves receiving a shiny, sharp new pair of secateurs, and you can’t go wrong with these.

Among the most popular available, they’re widely used by professional and amateurs alike, with solid forged metal alloy handles and replaceable precision-made Swiss blades.

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BANANARAMA: THEY'RE REALLY SAYING SOMETHING

PAGE 2

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Bananarama tour?

We heard a rumour

It's been quite a year for Bananarama. Sara Dallin, Keren Woodward and Siobhan Fahey have been sweeping all before them – after Siobhan rejoined the band for a massive tour.

The singer had left Bananarama in 1988 to form Shakespeares Sister, with whom she played until 1996. She then appeared in films and recorded music alone, as well as appearing with Dexys Midnight Runners, before agreeing to rejoin Bananarama in February this year for a major tour.

And the band's shows have been well received by fans who have relived their youth to such hits as It Ain't What You Do... Really Saying Something, Shy Boy, Cruel Summer, Robert De Niro's Waiting... and Love in the First Degree as well as the US number one Venus and other hits like Cruel Summer and I Heard A Rumour.

Bananarama had been formed by Sara, Siobhan and Keren in 1981. When Siobhan quit, Jacqui O'Sullivan joined and they enjoyed more hits with songs like I Want You Back and Help. Jacqui later left and Sara and Keren enjoyed success as a duo with Movin' On and More, More, More.

The band's achievements speak for themselves. They have enjoyed two Band Aid appearances, an entry in the Guinness Book of World Records as the most successful female band worldwide with the most charting singles, all of which were international hits, four hitting the US Billboard Top 10 including a number one with Venus. To date they have had 32 Top 40 UK hits, released 10 albums and sold 30 million records.

TEENAGERS

The band formed when teenagers and childhood friends Sara and Keren met Siobhan. Sara and Siobhan were studying journalism at the London University of Arts (London College of Fashion) and Keren was working at the BBC.

About to be thrown out of the YWCA for 'keeping late hours' Sara and Keren bumped into ex-Sex Pistol Paul Cook in the club Taboo. He offered them a place to stay above the Sex Pistols' old rehearsal room. He ended up producing their first single Aie A Mwana. One early radio play from legendary DJ John Peel was all it took to catch the attention of ex-Specials singer Terry Hall, who tracked the girls down and asked them to perform on The Fun Boy Three single It Ain't What You Do.

They went on to support everyone from Iggy Pop to Paul Weller (Paul went on to pen a track for the band's first album) appearing on numerous TV shows while still being so skint they were using the baths at the local swimming pool for £1 a throw.

For the next 10 years the girls were everywhere and so were their hits. They became internationally hot property when hits Cruel Summer hit the US Billboard Top 10 with their video filmed in New York.

Identifying the right producers/collaborators at the right point in their career was always their strong point from Jolley and Swain who produced their debut album Deep Sea Skiving and follow up Bananarama to Stock/Aitken/Waterman who produced the platinum-selling WOW!, to Youth with Pop Life.

In 2005 they were picking out Swedish hitmakers Murlyn to produce the album Drama (singles Move In My Direction and Look On The Floor Top 20 UK, US Billboard dance

Back in the day – Keren Woodward, Sara Dallin and Siobhan Fahey



number two) and in 2009 they found a perfect foil in Ian Masterson (Pet Shop Boys, Girls Aloud, Kylie) who produced the album VIVA.

Bananarama like the Go Go's and the Bangles were not a manufactured band but three friends who came from the London club scene with a punk attitude and were always in control of their own destiny.

In 2012 Bananarama have appeared in the hit ITV comedy Benidorm, they embarked to the US for the Pinktober

tour at Hard Rock Cafes and released a brand new four tracks digital EP called Now Or Never. In February 2016, the girls embarked upon a successful Australian Tour, followed by a sold out Japan tour in October.

And now, the original Bananarama

For the next 10 years the girls were everywhere and so were their hits

line up are back together for a string of live shows in 2017. It will be fans' only chance to see Sara, Keren and Siobhan live across the UK.

Keren was in a relationship with former Wham! star Andrew Ridgeley for 25 years, but they parted ways last year. Speaking about the break-up, she said things didn't always work out but they'd remained close friends and Andrew would be attending quite a few dates on the tour.

The biggest girl group of the 1980s were sworn enemies for many years but they reconciled for a barbecue at Siobhan's home in Bethnal Green. They rekindled their love and friendship and a few months later, Keren picked up the phone and told Siobhan she should go on tour with them. They had never actually done a tour, the three of them, together. Siobhan agreed and the rest is history.

See them perform at Arena Birmingham on Thursday, November 23.

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.



Andy and Paul of OMD



Nostalgia gigs aren't for us – despite the money

If ever there was a band that over-achieved, it was synth-pop pioneers OMD.

Duo from The Wirral, singer Andy McCluskey and keyboardist Paul Humphreys, sold around 40 million records including hit singles Enola Gay, Souvenir, Joan of Arc, Maid of Orleans and Locomotion.

Architecture and Morality, their 1981 hit album, gave them their first platinum disc while four others went gold. This autumn, McCluskey et al are up to their old tricks with the release of their 13th studio album, The Punishment of Luxury – which entered the chart at number four – and a tour including Birmingham Symphony Hall on Tuesday. And yet, for all their success, critics have always been a little sniffy about Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark.

Andy says: "The reality is that certain people still have attitudes and issues towards a band that plays synths. That's always been the way. So we've always just gone our own way and done better than people would have expected anyway. We are coming up to the 40th anniversary of a rolling musical accident.

"We suffered in the mid 1980s from not writing the quality consistently. I carried on without Paul in the 1990s, then we got back together and next year the band will have been together for as long as we were the first time round." Andy was determined that OMD would not join the nostalgia circuit, adding: "We were offered quite good money but we felt uncomfortable with doing just the nostalgia gigs. The whole ethos for us was to do something new."

Rock legend home gig is hottest ticket



The Black Country's resident rock god, Robert Plant, is back in action on home turf following the release of his new album Carry Fire.

On Monday the former Led Zeppelin frontman brings his Sensational Space Shifters to Wolverhampton Civic Hall for what is likely to be one of the region's best gigs of 2017. Of course, it's long been a sell out. Those lucky enough to have a ticket can anticipate a few Led Zep classics.

At Birmingham Arena tomorrow (Friday) Ian Gillan, Roger Glover, Ian Paice, Steve Morse and Don

Airey assemble as Deep Purple with support from Europe. The same venue hosts powerhouse duo Royal Blood on Saturday and Depeche Mode's Global Spirit tour on Sunday. Then on Tuesday the city centre venue hosts James Blunt, enjoying a new lease of life after his Ed Sheeran collaborations.

Those that can't make the Plant gig could get some excellent consolation at a homecoming gig for Black Country blues rock sensation Joanne Shaw Taylor at the Symphony Hall on Monday.

Other major Wolverhampton Civic Hall shows see Placebo play their rescheduled October date on

Tuesday, Goldie on Thursday (see below) and harmonious folk rock from Fleet Foxes next Friday.

Bilston's Robin 2 venue has a varied line-up with Liverpool disco favourites The Real Thing tomorrow (Fri), electro-rave-reggae outfit Dreadzone on Saturday, heavy metal heroes Tygers of Pan Tang on Tuesday and US blues singer Samantha Fish on Wednesday.

It's funk night at Birmingham Town Hall tomorrow (Fri) with Incognito, Circus VIII and Trope, and the venue hosts folk rock veterans The Oyster Band on Tuesday.

A Christmas Carol and lots of laughs

It's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas, particularly at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre where a popular amateur company is bringing A Christmas Carol – The Musical to the stage from Tuesday to Saturday. Bilston Operatic Company's production sees Charles Dickens' classic tale of Scrooge given a musical makeover. Tickets are priced from £12. For more information visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk website or call 01902 429212.

Comedy highlights include Jimmy Carr at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Saturday and Daniel Sloss, one of a handful of British comics to find success in America, at Wolverhampton Slade Rooms on Sunday. Sean Lock brings his Keep It Light show to Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Wednesday (Nov 22) and Paul Chowdhry is at the Wulfrun Hall next Friday.

Goldie returns with 'best of the best'

Home-grown drum 'n' bass pioneer Goldie will return to Wolverhampton next week for a concert as part of his nationwide tour. The show at the Civic Hall on Thursday, November 23, Of The Journey Man tour, named after his new album, Goldie says: "This will be one of a kind: a culmination of everything past, present and future in my music, like it has never been heard before, live. I've got the absolute best of the best on stage with me and we're going to create something new right in front of your eyes."



ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

BENJAMINS BANQUETING SUITES

Halesowens premier wedding venue

Benjamins opened in Birmingham Street, Halesowen in December 1997, the building was originally The Primitive Methodist Chapel and supporting buildings erected in 1868 according to the stone over the main entrance, a foundation stone was laid in August 1889 by the then Mayor of Dudley Benjamin Hingley Esq. MP and although not named after Benjamin Hingley the stone was certainly the inspiration for the name of the Banqueting Suite.

The stone now takes pride of place over the fire place in the Cornbow Room.

Set over 2 floors Benjamins can accommodate functions of all sizes upto 450 guests and indeed upto 650 guests if the whole of the building is used for one function as was the case in August 2011!



The Cornbow Room is on the lower floor, it is suitable for parties up to 200 guests, has its own stage for DJ, Band or any other entertainment with access to the large patio area which can be used for Barbeques or Pig Roasts weather

permitting, also due to its layout is ideally suited for smaller events.

The Aldridge and Beaumont Suites are adjacent on the first floor and are usually used as one room for larger parties, ideal for formal weddings due to its open plan layout.

For civil ceremonies where the guests for the ceremony are 100 or less the ceremony is usually conducted in the Beaumont Suite whilst the removable wall is in place between the 2 Banqueting Suites and then the room can be opened out for the Wedding Breakfast and evening guests.

For civil ceremonies where the guest numbers exceed 100 both rooms can be open and used for the service and can accommodate up to 200 guests for the service.

Civil ceremonies for up to 100 guests can also take place in the Cornbow Room.

Civil Ceremonies of less than 100 usually conducted in the Beaumont Suite or Cornbow Rooms.



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CHOICE



Michael McIntyre

Michael McIntyre's Big Show (BBC1, 8.10pm)
Do Ant and Dec finally have a rival for the crown of 'Best Saturday Night TV Host'? When this show first aired as a one-off Christmas special in 2015 and then a full series last year, the critics and public were sceptical, especially considering some of BBC and ITV's lacklustre recent efforts at weekend entertainment shows. However, McIntyre has not only proven that variety is alive and well, but also that he is a pretty fine host and entertainer. Tonight he returns to London's Theatre Royal on Drury Lane for the third run of his Big Show. After his own new stand-up routine, he introduces comedy with Joe Lycett, and music by chart-topping Scottish singer-songwriter Emeli Sande.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nigella: At My Table. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Rugby League World Cup. **2.00** Live International Rugby Union. Wales v Georgia (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme. **5.40** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.
6.00 **Pointless Celebrities.** Hannah Waddingham, Gemma Whelan, Jeff Rawle, Chris Rankin, David Dixon, Sandra Dickinson, Norman Lovett and Hattie Hayridge take part in a sci-fi and fantasy edition of the quiz.
6.45 **Strictly Come Dancing.** The star-studded dance contest reaches its most dazzling annual milestone, as the eight remaining pro-celebrity duos depart from London and head north to the Lancashire coast, where they put their skills to the test against the iconic backdrop of Blackpool Tower Ballroom. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman open proceedings by introducing a grand-scale group performance, in which the couples are joined on the dancefloor by judges Shirley Ballas, Darcy Bussell, Bruno Tonioli and Craig Revel Horwood. Already a glamorous affair, Strictly turns the dial well and truly up to 11 for its yearly trip to the northern resort town, with even more glitzy sets and routines that push the performers to their limits. With the grand final now only a month away, the stars once again face the judges' scrutiny ahead of yet another elimination.
8.10 **Michael McIntyre's Big Show.** New series. The comedian's family entertainment show returns, as Emeli Sande and Joe Lycett perform, and former Labour MP Ed Balls plays Celebrity Send to All.
9.10 **Casualty.** The day of Charlotte's christening arrives, and Robyn is dumbfounded when she bumps into Glen – her terminally ill ex-fiancee – who Dylan has been secretly preparing for a reunion.
10.00 **BBC News:** Weather. National Lottery Update.
10.20 **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches.
11.50 **The NFL Show.**
12.20 **Film:** Man on the Moon. (1999)
2.10 **Weather** for the Week Ahead. **2.15** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 Holiday of My Lifetime with Len Goodman. (R) **7.00** Nature's Weirdest Events. (R) **7.30** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. **8.00** Deadly 60. (R) **8.30** Show Me What You're Made Of. **9.00** Saturday Mash-Up! **11.00** Natural World: Tiger Dynasty. (R) **12.00** Rick Stein's Long Weekends. (R) **1.00** Italy Unpacked. (R) **2.00** Live Tennis: ATP World Tour Finals. The opening semi-final of the singles competition. **4.30** Mastermind. (R) **5.00** Live International Rugby Union. Scotland v New Zealand (Kick-off 5.15pm).
7.30 **International Rugby Union.** England v Australia. Lee McKenzie presents action from the autumn international at Twickenham, where the hosts were looking to continue their fine run against the Wallabies. With commentary by Sara Orchard and Brian Moore.
8.30 **Dad's Army.** Jones buys black-market pigeons from wheeler-dealer Walker – but is horrified to discover the birds were taken from Trafalgar Square. Comedy, starring Clive Dunn and James Beck. (R)
9.00 **My Country.** A TV adaptation of the National Theatre production of the same name, written by Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy and director Rufus Norris. Compiled in the days following the Brexit vote, using testimonies from people aged nine to 97, the play interviewees real interviews with speeches from party leaders, as Britannia – a personification of the nation itself – calls a meeting to listen to the opinions of her people. Amid passionate debate, barbed rebuttals and divided perspectives, she seeks an answer to the question of whether there can ever be a true United Kingdom.
9.55 **QI XL.** Extended edition of Sandi Toksvig's debut as host, in which Alan Davies, Gailard Lloyd, Romesh Ranganathan and Phill Jupitus answer questions associated with the letter n.
10.40 **David Gilmore: Live at Pompeii.** Highlights of the guitarist's concerts at the ancient Pompeii amphitheatre in Rome in July 2016, featuring songs from his solo career as well as several Pink Floyd favourites.
11.40 **Film: Spike Island.** (2012) Drama, starring Elliott Tittensor.
1.20 **Film:** Badlands. (1973) **2.50** This Is BBC Two. **4.30** Live Rugby League World Cup.

ITV

6.00 CITY: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Fangbone. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.00** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** Saturday Morning with James Martin. **11.20** Gino's Italian Coastal Escape. (R) **11.50** ITV News: Weather. **11.55** The X Factor Live. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Cheltenham. **4.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **4.30** The Harbour. (R) **5.00** The Cruise. (R) **5.30** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs. (R)
6.00 **Regional Programme:** Weather.
6.05 **ITV News:** Weather.
6.15 **Catchphrase.** Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show in which three contestants guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues, before one of them plays to win £50,000. (R)
6.50 **New You've Been Framed!** Harry Hill narrates more comedy mishaps submitted by viewers, including a fireball exploding over a family, and a toddler managing to fire a champagne cork into his mother's eye.
7.15 **Ninja Warrior UK.** Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara host the fourth heat, as competitors from across the UK test their strength, speed and courage in the obstacle-course challenge. (R)
8.10 **The X Factor Live.** The talent show enters its fourth weekend of live eliminations, while two acts battle it out for another "money-can't-buy" prize, the least popular could face elimination.
9.40 **The Jonathan Ross Show.** The host is joined by comedy star Peter Kay, The Hobbit and Beauty and the Beast actor Luke Evans, and actress and singer Sheridan Smith. Last in the series.
10.40 **ITV News:** Weather.
10.55 **Film: First Blood.** (1982) A Vietnam veteran escapes unjust imprisonment and flees into the wilderness, where he fights the law on his own terms. Action thriller, with Sylvester Stallone.
12.40 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Triathlon: Challenge Aruba. **6.40** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Frasier. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.25** The Big Bang Theory. **8.55** The Big Bang Theory. **9.25** The Simpsons. (R) **9.55** The Simpsons. (R) **10.25** The Simpsons. (R) **10.55** The Simpsons. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. (R) **4.30** Best Laid Plans. **5.35** Grand Designs. (R)
6.30 **Channel 4 News.**
7.00 **Volatile Earth: Killer Hurricanes.** The documentary series exploring the impact of past natural disasters concludes with its most recent example, the Great Hurricane of 1780, claiming the lives of almost 28,000 people across the Caribbean, the Great Hurricane is thought to have been the most deadly in recorded history, and scientists pick through the debris left behind to paint a picture of the scale, speed and ferocity with which the storm would have hit the woefully unprepared islands. Last in the series. Previously seen on More4.
8.00 **First Humans: The Cave Discovery.** Documentary following the discovery of fossilised remains in a South African cave that were revealed to have come from a previously unknown species of human ancestor. (R)
9.00 **Film: Lucy.** (2014) A courier is kidnapped and forced to become a drug mule. When she is exposed to the experimental chemicals she is smuggling, it boosts her intelligence and reflexes to superhuman levels. She uses her newfound abilities to get revenge on her captors, but as the process continues, she evolves into something more than human. Sci-fi thriller, starring Scarlett Johansson and Morgan Freeman.
10.45 **Film: R.I.P.D.** (2013) A cop killed in the line of duty is recruited by a ghostly police force assigned to battle evil spirits. Fantasy adventure, starring Ryan Reynolds and Jeff Bridges.
12.35 The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** The Last Leg. (R) **2.20** Hollyoaks. **4.30** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.25** Draw It! (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.30** Access. **11.35** **Film:** Christmas Truce. (2015) **1.20** **Film:** Deck the Halls. (2006) Christmas comedy, starring Danny DeVito and Matthew Broderick. **3.05** **Film:** A Belle for Christmas. (2014) Family adventure, starring Dean Cain. **4.05** 5 News Update. **4.10** **Film:** A Belle for Christmas. (2014) Concluded. **5.00** **Film:** Christmas in Homestead. (2016) Premiere. Romantic drama, starring Taylor Cole and Michael Rady.
6.00 **5 News Update.**
6.05 **Film:** Christmas in Homestead. (2016) Concluded.
7.00 **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** In West London, agents Max and Cona chase up more than £2,000 in unpaid parking fines, while officers in Lancashire try to collect £4,000 owed for unpaid nursery fees. (R)
7.55 **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** Gareth and Mitch are in north Devon with a writ to recover more than £8,000 owed by a dissatisfied customer to a supplier of windows and doors. In Nottingham, Stewart and Vic are on an eviction that will test their patience to the limits, with a landlord who wants his property back after months of rent arrears and alleged anti-social behaviour. (R)
8.55 **5 News Weekend.**
9.00 **Football on 5: The Championship.** Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Reading v Wolverhampton Wanderers and Queens Park Rangers v Aston Villa.
9.55 **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Colin Murray introduces all the goals from Leagues One and Two, including Rotherham United v Shrewsbury Town and Wigan Athletic v Bradford City.
10.25 **NCIS: New Orleans.** The team investigates when a private plane crashes in a bayou, Gregorio tries to decide whether to stay in New Orleans or return to Washington.
11.20 **NCIS: New Orleans.** The team investigates when a Navy Seal candidate is killed weeks before his graduation, and LaSalle tries to avoid an old flame.
12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** **Film:** Haunting of Briar House. (2015) **4.40** Access. **4.55** Great Artists. (R) **5.20** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Natural World **8.00** The Mekong River with Sue Perkins **9.00** I Know Who You Are **12.15** The Vietnam War **1.15** Top of the Pops: 1984 **1.50** Natural World **2.50** The Mekong River with Sue Perkins **3.50** Close
ITV2
12.15 Take Me Out **1.30** You've Been Framed! **Gold 2.00** **Film:** Beethoven's 2nd (1993) **3.00** FYI Daily **3.05** **Film:** Beethoven's 2nd (1993) **3.50** **Film:** Step Up (2006) **4.55** FYI Daily **5.00** **Film:** Step Up (2006) **6.00** **Film:** Jack the Giant Slayer (2013) **7.05** FYI Daily **7.10** **Film:** Jack the Giant Slayer (2013) **8.10** **Film:** Quantum of Solace (2008) **9.10** FYI Daily **9.15** **Film:** Quantum of Solace (2008) **10.25** Celebrity Juice **11.10** Family Guy **1.00** American Dad! **1.55** Release the Hounds **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
11.00 **Film:** Columbo: The Conspirators (1978) **1.00** Foyle's War **3.00** Midsummer Murders **11.05** The Syndicate **12.15** Foyle's War **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV4
11.35 The Big Fish Off **12.35** Shed and Buried **2.35** **Film:** The Alamo (1960) **3.50** FYI Daily **3.55** **Film:** The Alamo (1960) **5.55** Hornblower **7.55** River Monsters **9.00** An Audience with Billy Connolly **10.05** **Film:** American Gangster (2007) **11.05** FYI Daily **11.10** **Film:** American Gangster (2007) **1.10** The Sweeney **2.10** The Classic Car Show **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.00 How I Met Your Mother **12.00** **Film:** The Dog Who Saved Christmas (2009) **1.50** Toy Story Toons: Small Fry **2.00** The Goldbergs **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** **Film:** The Mechanic (2011) **10.50** Gogglebox **12.55** Naked Attraction **2.00** Rude Tube **3.25** Gogglebox **4.20** Rules of Engagement
Film4
11.00 Song of the Sea (2014) **1.00** Picture Perfect (1997) **3.05** Just Wright (2010) **5.05** Rio (2011) **6.55** Dante's Peak (1997) **9.00** Darkman (1990) A scientist is left disfigured by a criminal gang and seeks revenge on those responsible. Thriller, with Liam Neeson and Frances McDormand. **11.00** Aliens (1986) Lone survivor Ripley joins a military expedition that encounters hordes of the creatures that wiped out her crew. Sci-fi thriller sequel, with Sigourney Weaver and Michael Biehn. **1.05** Rare Exports: A Christmas Tale (2010) **3.50** Close

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

NEWLY REFURBISHED PARK LANE TAVERN

They always say never judge a book by its cover so we decided to check out The Park Lane Tavern in Colley Gate, and I have to say what was on offer in there was a total surprise.



It serves a carvery option 7 days a week from midday which consists of a choice of 4 meats, turkey, beef, pork and gammon and accompanied by stuffing, Yorkshire puddings and up to 12 vegetables, topped off with what they call their "secret recipe gravy" known also as what mother used to make! All this for just £4.99 for a lunchtime meal or £5.99 evenings and Saturdays and £7.99 for Sunday lunch represents extremely good value by today's standards.

They also don't forget their mini diners with 'Kids Eat Free' Monday to Saturday between 3pm and 6pm and during school holidays it's All Day Monday to Saturday.

But it doesn't stop their they also have a full main menu consisting of the classic pub favourites such as steaks, mixed grills, burgers and fish and chips, where the fish would not be out of place in any issue of 'Moby Dick'. To finish is there very tempting dessert menu, that's if you have room after the size of meals you get at The Park Lane Tavern.

Then if that's not enough choice for you you can also choose for the breakfast which is served Friday, Saturday and Sunday 08.30am until 11.00am. Their breakfast is a buffet style 'All you can eat' with enough choice to satisfy any diner from eggs 2 ways, bacon, sausage, mushrooms, baked beans, hash browns, black pudding, grilled fresh tomatoes, toast & fried bread. There's even



jam for your toast if you still not full after all that.

Half Price Monday

They also host special evenings like their 'Half Price Monday' which has proven to be very popular, and why not, already reasonably priced selected main meals off their main menu (which includes steaks) at half price served between 5pm and 8pm every Monday. Also their psychic evenings where for £15 you get a reading from a medium and a carvery, for those believers amongst you that must be a bargain.

You get a very friendly feeling when you enter The Park Lane Tavern and that's mostly down to the staff. Happy to see you and always keen to help. They have a lot of regular customers and it's been known for a customer's drink to be poured and waiting for them before they reach the bar, you don't see that at many places nowadays.

There are no airs or graces at The Park Lane Tavern, you get delicious food at great prices served by happy staff in a comfortable environment. No wonder this place has people returning time after time.

CHOICE



Ant & Dec
I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! (ITV, 9pm)
New series. Ant and Dec present the celebrity survival challenge, as another batch of famous faces are flown out to the Australian jungle, where they can look forward to completing the usual round of tough daily tasks and dreaded Bushtucker Trials until one of them is chosen as this year's king or queen. At the time of going to press, no contestants have been confirmed, but whoever is brave enough to take up the challenge will face the toughest journey to the camp that the series has ever featured - plus several brand new surprises.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.25** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** BBC Newsroom Live. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Regional Programme. **1.45** Money for Nothing. (R) **2.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.00** Songs of Praise. **3.35** Children in Need: The Best Bits. **4.50** Blue Planet II. (R) **5.50** BBC News.
6.05 Regional Programme.
6.15 **Countryfile.** The rural affairs show visits Hertfordshire, where Charlotte Smith makes the acquaintance of a man who has made it his mission to save the barbel in the Old River Lea. Sean Fletcher build a home fit for a kingfisher, and John Craven revisits his scouting days by cooking on a woodland fire. Plus, Adam Henson tours an estate where "rewilding" and farming sit side-by-side, and Tom Heap examines the science behind culling, as the contentious badger cull enters its fifth year.
7.15 **Strictly Come Dancing: The Results.** Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present the results of last night's show before another couple leaves the contest. Featuring music from Alfie Boe, Michael Ball and Tears for Fears.
8.00 **Blue Planet II.** Wildlife that live thousands of kilometres from land, featuring footage of baby turtles using debris as life rafts and sperm whales hunting for squid deep beneath the surface.
9.00 **Howards End.** A death is followed by an unusual final request that throws the deceased's family into confusion. The Schlegels face eviction from their home, which is due to be demolished.
10.00 BBC News.
10.20 Regional Programme.
10.30 **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman presents highlights of the day's only Premier League match, featuring Watford v West Ham United at Vicarage Road.
11.15 **Ronny Chieng: International Student.** Professor Dale is impressed at the badminton skills of Ronny and his friends, and forces them to play for the college's Australian rules football team in a crucial game.
11.45 **Michael McIntyre's Big Show.** (R) **12.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.50** BBC News.

BBC2

7.30 Great British Garden Revival. (R) **8.35** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Food & Drink. (R) **11.30** My Life on a Plate. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** International Rugby Union. (R) **2.00** Rugby League World Cup. **3.30** Wild Brazil. (R) **4.30** Coast. (R) **5.00** Flog It! (R)
6.00 **Live Tennis: ATP World Tour Finals.** Sue Barker presents coverage from day eight at the O2 in London, featuring the final of the singles competition. Last year's showpiece match saw Andy Murray win this title for the first time in his career following a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Novak Djokovic, which also meant he would end the year as the number one-ranked player in the world. Subsequent programmes are subject to change.
9.00 **Britain's Cycling Superheroes: What Price Success?** The controversy surrounding Britain's international cyclists, examining how Dave Brailsford and Shane Sutton have led the nation to a run of recent successes in both the Olympics and the Tour de France, even as their methods have suffered criticism.
10.00 **Snowfall.** Franklin must make a dangerous choice. Teddy tries to find out the truth about Logan's death, and Lucia makes Oso a full partner - without telling Pedro. Guest starring RZA.
10.40 **Mock the Week.** Dara O Briain and Hugh Dennis front a special edition of the topical comedy show featuring best bits and unseen material from the series. (R)
11.10 **Film: The Lighthouse.** (2016) Premiere. Two men are assigned to keep a lighthouse on an island in the Irish sea in 1801. A freak storm cuts the island off from the mainland for months on end, and the isolation drives both men to the brink of madness, with devastating consequences. Fact-based thriller, starring Mark Lewis Jones and Michael Jibson.
12.50 Sign Zone: Question Time. Topical debate from Newcastle, with panellists Shadow Foreign Secretary Emily Thornberry, former Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron, novelist Val McDermid and journalist Rod Liddle. (R) **1.50** Holly City. Oliver is determined to win funding for his chest wall reconstruction project. (R) **2.50** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ben 10. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Make It Pop. (R) **9.00** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Australian Wilderness with Ray Mears. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.05** Film: Carry On Screaming. (1966) **12.15** ITV News: Weather. **1.05** The X Factor Live. (R) **2.35** Midlands Murders. (R) **4.30** Elton John: The Nation's Favourite Song. (R) **6.05** Regional Programme: Weather. **6.15** ITV News: Weather.
6.30 **The Chase: Celebrity Special.** Bradley Walsh presents as celebrity contestants Mark the Billingham, Aldo Zilli, Lucy Pargeter and Joey Essex pit their wits against ruthless quiz genius the Chaser in the hope of winning a potential prize pot worth thousands of pounds. They must work as a team and play strategically to answer general knowledge questions against the clock and race down the game board to the exit without being caught.
7.30 **The X Factor Live.** The fourth weekend of live shows comes to a conclusion, with the remaining acts competing to impress the audience and the judges and retain their place in the contest for another week. Presented by Dermot O'Leary.
9.00 **I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!** New series. Ant and Dec present the celebrity survival challenge, as another batch of famous faces are flown out to the Australian jungle.
10.45 ITV News: Weather.
11.05 **Peston on Sunday.** Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston and Allegra Stratton. (R)
12.00 Gone to Pot: American Road Trip. Linda Robson, Pam St Clement, Christopher Biggins, John Fashanu and Bobby George go on a road trip across America to explore the pros and cons of legalising marijuana. (R) **12.50** Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Kevin Can Wait. **6.25** Kevin Can Wait. **6.45** Kevin Can Wait. **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Jamie's Quick & Easy Food. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **3.00** Film: Mr Popper's Penguins. (2011) Family comedy, starring Jim Carrey. **4.50** Channel 4 News. **5.20** Film: Men in Black II. (2002) Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones.
7.00 **Messages Home: Lost Films of the British Army.** Documentary about filmed messages made by British soldiers serving in Burma during the Second World War, which were recently recovered in a Manchester Town Hall basement. The footage features messages from the soldiers to their families at home, including a father speaking to a daughter he has not met, a decorated veteran troubled by the thought of killing, and a gunner longing to return to the woman he loved. (R)
8.00 **Guy Martin's WWI Tank.** The presenter builds a working replica of a First World War tank to mark the centenary of the Battle of Cambrai, and takes his tank driving test so he can take his creation on to the streets for Lincoln's Remembrance Day parade. He also delves into the history of the earliest armoured vehicles, the soldiers who crewed them, and the women who built them.
10.00 **Gogglebox.** Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)
11.00 **Film: Atonement.** (2007) A girl accuses her sister's lover of a crime he did not commit, unaware her actions will have tragic repercussions. Romantic period drama, starring Keira Knightley and James McAvoy.
1.15 The Secret Life of 4 Year Olds. Cameras follow playground friendships, romances and rivalries. (R) **2.10** The Supervet. (R) **3.05** Grand Designs Australia. (R) **4.00** Gillette World Sport. **4.25** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **4.55** Mobil 1 The Grid. (R) **5.20** Jamie's Comfort Food. (R) **5.35** Countdown. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.35** Wissper. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.45** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **6.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.00** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.25** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.35** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.30** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.50** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.25** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.50** Cruising With Jane McDonald. **12.10** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **12.40** Film: Chasing Christmas. (2005) **2.20** Film: Santa Who? (2000) **3.25** 5 News Update. **3.30** Film: Santa Who? (2000) Concluded. **4.10** Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl. (2003) **5.10** 5 News Update. **5.15** Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl. (2003) Concluded.
7.00 **Christmas Makes You Laugh Out Loud.** Iain Lee presents Christmas-themed videos that have taken the internet by storm in a seasonal special showcasing hilarious online clips with a festive twist. (R)
8.00 **Aviva Premiership Rugby Highlights.** Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman present action from the eighth round of matches, including Gloucester v Saracens, Exeter Chiefs v Harlequins and Leicester Tigers v Sale Sharks.
8.55 **5 News Weekend.**
9.00 **Happy 90th: Ken Dodd In His Own Words.** Profile of the comedian, incorporating some of his best performances alongside rare archive interviews and contributions from friends, colleagues and fellow comics. (R)
11.05 **Happy 90th: Another Audience with Ken Dodd.** The frantic Merseyside funnyman entertains a star-studded audience. Among those attending are Claire Sweeney, Martin Clunes, Gary Rhodes, Ann Widdecombe and Ricky Tomlinson. (R)
12.20 Britain's Best Dressed Acts. (R) **1.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** Pits: Behind Closed Doors. (R) **4.00** My Mum's Hotter Than Me! (R) **4.50** Great Artists. (R) **5.20** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** Stunning Solists at the BBC **9.00** Shark **10.00** Country Music Awards 2017: Highlights **11.00** Rich Hall's Countryer Than You **12.30** Country at the BBC **2.30** Shark **3.30** Close
ITV2
1.00 Take Me Out **2.15** You've Been Framed! Top 100 Animals **3.15** Film: Happy Feet Two (2011) **4.15** FYI Daily **4.20** Film: Happy Feet Two (2011) **5.20** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **6.20** FYI Daily **6.25** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **7.10** Film: Inception (2010) **8.10** FYI Daily **8.15** Film: Inception (2010) **10.15** Family Guy **10.45** I'm a Celebrity: Extra Camp **11.45** Family Guy **12.45** American Dad! **1.45** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **1.55** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV3
1.20 Film: Murder on the Orient Express (1974) **2.20** FYI Daily **2.25** Film: Murder on the Orient Express (1974) **3.55** Film: Columbo: Make Me a Perfect Murder (1978) **5.00** Wycliffe **7.05** Agatha Christie's Marple **9.00** The Syndicate **10.10** Film: The Theory of Everything (2014) **11.15** FYI Daily **11.20** Film: The Theory of Everything (2014) **12.35** The Knock **2.35** Mr Selfridge **3.25** Wycliffe **ITV4**
1.30 ITV Racing Live at Cheltenham and Fontwell Park. **4.00** Film: The Alamo (1960) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05** Film: The Alamo (1960) **7.15** Football's Greatest: George Best **7.30** River Monsters **8.00** The Chase: Celebrity Special **9.00** Film: Cliffhanger (1993) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: Cliffhanger (1993) **11.15** Film: Hard to Kill (1990) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20** Film: Hard to Kill (1990) **1.20** River Monsters **1.50** The Avengers **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.00 Made in Chelsea **12.00** Don't Tell the Bride **1.00** Film: Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (2009) **2.45** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **3.00** The Goldbergs **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: Rise of the Planet of the Apes (2011) **10.05** Naked Attraction **11.05** The Big Bang Theory **12.05** Gogglebox **1.05** First Dates **2.10** Rude Tube
Film4
1.00 Thunderbirds (2004) **2.50** When Marnie Was There (2014) **4.55** Letters to Juliet (2010) **7.00** The Cold Light of Day (2012) **9.00** Exodus: Gods and Kings (2014) **11.55** Legion (2010) **1.55** Lovelace (2013) **3.50** Close



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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Nanny for Christmas, Channel 5, 3.15pm
An unemployed advertising executive gets a job as an au pair and tries to give the kids in her charge a break from their rigidly organised lives. She tries to impress an executive she is attracted to by claiming to still be in the advertising business, a deception that proves hard to maintain. Romantic comedy, starring Emmanuelle Vaugier and Richard Ruccolo. (2010)

TUESDAY
Dear Secret Santa, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman receives a series of anonymous Christmas cards which appear to be from an old friend of hers who recently died. Drama, starring Tatyana Ali and Bill Cobbs. (2013)

WEDNESDAY
A Snow Globe Christmas, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A cynical TV executive accidentally knocks herself out while railing against the disappointments of her life. She wakes up to find herself in another world, where she is married with two children. As she comes to realise she is not dreaming, she must decide which life she wants to live. Festive fantasy, starring Alicia Witt, Donald Faison and Christina Milian. (2013)



Boyhood, Friday, Channel 4, 12.05am

THURSDAY
Wild Card, Channel 5, 9pm
Las Vegas bodyguard Nick Wild finds himself dealing with more than just his gambling problem after he takes revenge on the criminal who attacked his friend, little realising that the thug in question is the son of a mob boss. Action thriller, starring Jason Statham, Michael Angarano and Milo Ventimiglia. (2015)

FRIDAY
Boyhood, Channel 4, 12.05am
A boy goes through a series of changes in his life, beginning as a six-year-old facing a reunion with his estranged father and a move to a new house. As he grows up, the youngster deals with further upheavals that shape his view of the world. Richard Linklater's drama filmed over the course of 12 years, starring Ellar Coltrane, Patricia Arquette and Ethan Hawke. (2014)

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Mary serves up a tasty treat in her new culinary show

Channel 4's version of The Great British Bake Off has now aired, and most people would probably declare it to be a success – even if new judge Prue Leith did stumble at the final hurdle by accidentally tweeting the identity of the winner hours before the last episode aired.

But despite the revamped Bake Off's continuing popularity, it seems unlikely that original presenters Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins and judge Mary Berry are regretting not following the show to its new home – for a start, they simply haven't had time.

Mel and Sue have been busy hosting everything from Saturday night singing contests to travelogues about the Ganges, while Mary brought us Mary Berry Everyday and is due to judge a new televised contest, provisionally titled Britain's Best Cook. She's also set to be reunited with her old Bake Off friends for the festive special Mary, Mel and Sue's Surprise Party, which sees the trio coming together to throw a bash for the regulars at a South Wales community centre.

But before that, Mary is hosting the new series Country House Secrets, which sees her exploring some of the nation's most beloved stately homes – and finding out more about the food that has been served there.

In the process, she will learn about life both upstairs and downstairs, meeting the house's present-day custodians and the dedicated staff as she explores the kitchens, gardens and private rooms, many of which are usually off-limits to visitors.

And what she learns will inspire her to make her own special recipes, celebrating the heritage and legacy of the houses.

Mary Berry says: "I am so excited to be doing this new series with the BBC – I have always had an enquiring mind so I know I will be inspired by the Great Houses we visit."

Tanya Shaw, Managing Director of Shine TV added: "I can't think of anyone more perfect to tell the

stories of these great households and to bring us such a unique insight into Britain's rich culinary past."

In the opening edition, Mary heads to Highclere Castle in Hampshire, which is home to the 8th Earl and Countess of Carnarvon and is now most famous as the real-life Downton Abbey – it was the main location for the acclaimed period drama. However, it's also renowned as a setting for some of the most lavish and influential weekend parties in history.

As well as learning more about the property's illustrious past, Mary also discovers what it takes to keep such a grand home like this going in today's world as she talks to the family, staff and the estate's loyal group of gamekeepers.

Then Mary takes to the kitchen to prepare an elaborate menu for a grand finale dinner, including raspberry tarts and a gamekeeper's stew. Surely even Maggie Smith's imperious Dowager Countess wouldn't be able to find fault with that.



Mary Berry's Country House Secrets, Wednesday, BBC1, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Would I Lie to You? BBC1, 8.30pm
New series. Comedian and writer David Baddiel, former MP and Strictly Come Dancing 2016 star Ed Balls, stand-up and actress Jo Brand and ex-Pussycat Doll and Celebrity MasterChef 2015 winner Kimberly Wyatt join host Rob Brydon and captains David Mitchell and Lee Mack as the comedy panel show returns for its 11th series. As usual, the participants aim to hoodwink their opponents with absurd facts and plausible lies about themselves in a bid to secure a team victory and the dubious honour of being dubbed Rob's liar of the week.

TUESDAY
The Martin Lewis Money Show Live ITV, 8pm
Interest rates went up recently for the first time in an age, so it's rather timely that Martin Lewis is back with a live, two-hour special, in which he will no doubt address some of the issues that may cause for consumers. Credit card lending, energy prices and inflation are already on the up, and so the financial expert is determined to keep their impact on the general public down with some top tips to keep cash in your wallet. Christmas is looming too,

which can be a difficult time for those already struggling to make ends meet. There's advice on where to find the best bargains and Black Friday offers that should enable us to snap up cheap gifts and gadgets. Plus, consumers from across the country are being invited to pitch their questions to Lewis live on the night.

WEDNESDAY
The Secret Life of the Zoo Channel 4, 8pm
The keepers try to work out why male red panda Jung is losing weight, with a full medical examination scheduled after a special diet fails to solve the problem. West African mandrill JC is being challenged for his dominant position by his sons Ludo and Jareth and, while JC is taken for some health checks, Ludo gets 'over-friendly' with his dad's girlfriend. Tempos start to fray among Chester Zoo's Humboldt penguin colony during the annual moult – can youngsters Frazzle and Munch avoid being picked on by the grown-ups?

THURSDAY
The Search for a Miracle Cure Channel 4, 10pm
Documentary following leading

lawyer Mark Lewis, the man who fought the News of the World in the phone hacking scandal, as he joins a clinical trial that might offer a breakthrough cure for multiple sclerosis. He learned he had the condition at the age of 25 but his high-profile battle with the tabloids has exacerbated his symptoms.

Now 50, he travels to Hadassah University Medical Centre in Jerusalem, where the work being done could have a positive impact on neurological conditions such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

FRIDAY
The World's Greatest Bridges Channel 5, 8pm
The latest episode of this series should be even more insightful than usual, as engineer Rob Bell isn't just examining two bridges – he also meets the man who designed them, world-renowned British architect



Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast, Friday, Channel 4, 8pm

Norman Foster. Bell begins by learning more about the world's tallest bridge, the Millau Viaduct, which rises 343m over the river Tarn in southern France. It also has a claim to be the most beautiful bridge in the world and has become a tourist attraction in its own right, but it was also designed to be functional, taking traffic across the 2.5 km wide Tarn gorge. Bell discovers that at the same time that Foster was working on the viaduct, he was also creating London's Millennium Bridge, which caused controversy when it was found to wobble.

Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast Channel 4, 8pm
New series. Guest Simon Pegg joins Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Doherty as they rustle up dishes for the weekend from their cafe on Southend Pier. On the menu is a melt-in-the mouth lamb tagine, inspired by Simon's time spent filming in Morocco. Jamie prepares an indulgent Provençal bake, made by layering pancakes and packing them full of smoked ham and oozy cheese. This series sees Jimmy use his DIY skills to create imaginative solutions to food dilemmas, starting with a Korean barbecue served to a wheelchair rugby team from an innovative picnic table. Plus, the boys champion for more free-range duck farming in the UK.

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REF: EXP17 (please continue order on a separate sheet if required)

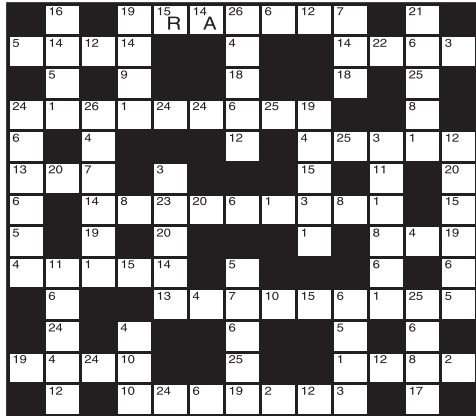
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BRAIN GYM

No.456

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
R	H	J	W	D	I	N	Z	E	T	L	P	K							
S	A	Q	C	F	X	Y	B	V	M	U	O	G							

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

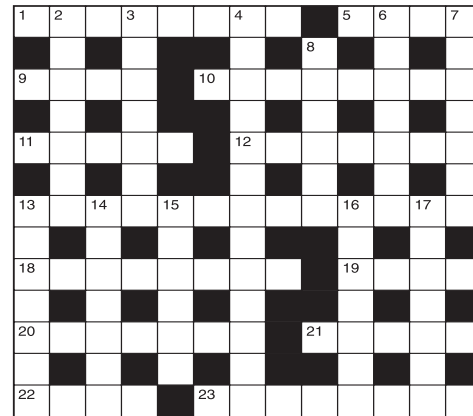
Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. In rear adaptation telephoned the one making adaptations (8)
5. Pass round nothing lacking warmth (4)
9. A sign that cattiness brings pleasure (4)
10. Its trend is loud and harsh (8)
11. Conservatively correct? (5)
12. Substitute wrong parcel with letter (7)
13. Mood and tense as changed in moderation (13)
18. It is clear father backs what he is (8)
19. Aim and score (4)
20. Make Peter go as person with a patron (7)
21. He is a dunderhead, and greedy with it (5)
22. Libertine in the garden? (4)
23. Not the status of the sitter, presumably (8)

Down

2. Having a regular system is the oriental way (7)
3. Balloon provides ventilation on vessel (7)
4. Go in with wrong main intent for hospitality (13)
6. Work in theatre (7)
7. Correspondence from landlords? (7)
8. It's easy to make bad lies about politician (6)
13. Hunter takes up role in repertory (7)
14. It gets the cartographer in the library (7)
15. Got paid for not quite being scholarly? (6)
16. Grading a skinflint (7)
17. Is not at stop on the line (7)



Quick Clues:

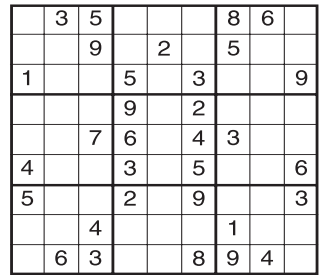
Across

1. Hallow (8)
5. Sour (4)
9. Cowshed (4)
10. Mishap (8)
11. Spruce (5)
12. Special gifts (7)
13. Pun (4,4,5)
18. Curiosity (8)
19. Slender (4)
20. Slavery (7)
21. Dense (5)
22. Vivacity (4)
23. Amaze (8)

Down

2. Bottomless (7)
3. Distinctly (7)
4. Waggishness (13)
6. Detergent (7)
7. Loathes (7)
8. Head cushion (6)
13. Flexible (7)
14. Feeler (7)
15. Tumult (6)
16. Obsolete (7)
17. Gods (7)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	7	9	2	3	6	8	4	1
4	3	6	9	8	1	2	5	7
1	2	8	5	7	4	9	6	3
3	9	2	1	4	7	5	8	6
8	1	7	6	5	9	4	3	2
6	4	5	8	2	3	7	1	9
7	6	1	4	9	8	3	2	5
2	8	3	7	1	5	6	9	4
9	5	4	3	6	2	1	7	8

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Alpaca; 4 Screws; 9 Well-conducted; 10 Looking; 11 Habit; 12 Stops; 14 Astir; 18 Oiled; 19 Pitcher; 21 National dress; 22 Steaks; 23 Stables. Down: 1 As well; 2 Pull out all the; 3 Cacti; 5 Couches; 6 Establishment; 7 Sedate; 8 Inigo; 13 Paddock; 15 Points; 16 Spray; 17 Crises; 20 Tidal. QUICK - Across: 1 Chintz; 4 Hamper; 9 Superstitious; 10 Amiable; 11 Carol; 12 Stick; 14 Verse; 18 Rifle; 19 Replied; 21 Inappropriate; 22 Extend; 23 Desert. Down: 1 Casual; 2 In point of fact; 3 Throb; 5 Article; 6 Procrastinate; 7 Result; 8 Strew; 13 Cheapen; 15 Arrive; 16 Prior; 17 Advent; 20 Purge.

Quiz

1. Which scientist was US ambassador to France 1776-85?
2. What is the capital of Luxembourg?
3. Who became director of the FBI in 1924?
4. Of what nationality was the astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus?
5. Of what was Goebbels minister in the Third Reich?
6. Who made the golden calf?
7. Which animal's fur is called musquash?
8. For how many matches was John Toshack Wales's manager?
9. In which US state is Palo Alto?
10. Who wrote The Mill on the Floss in 1860?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Honshu; 2 Simon Bolivar; 3 General de Gaulle; 4 Frankenstein; 5 Elijah; 6 Salmon; 7 Wolverhampton Wanderers; 8 Norns; 9 China; 10 Jutland.

Niner: CONSULATE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

25971
29628
12893641

gives a Surrey town,
gives a second Surrey town,
gives a Surrey village.

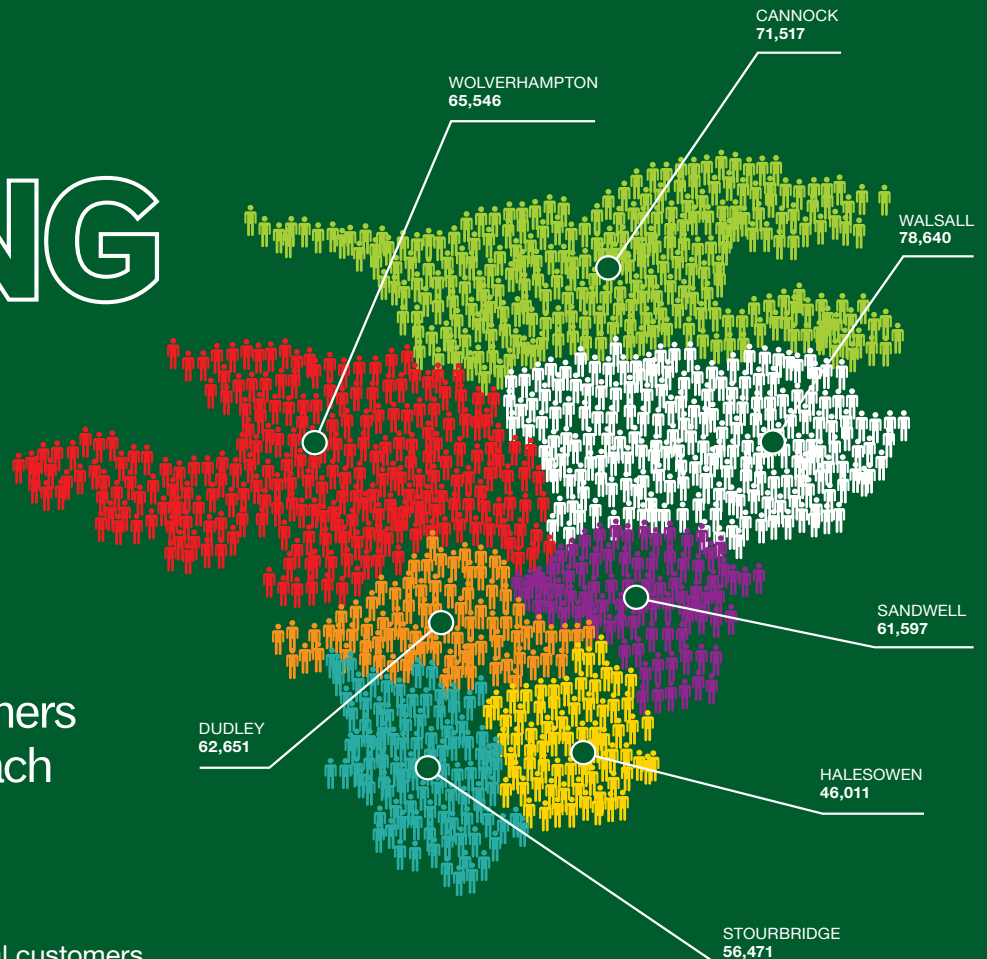
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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Spice is right at roadside curry

A GOOD curry in a friendly and relaxed setting, which doesn't break the bank, is something many families look for when eating out.

So if you fancy authentic Indian food served in a traditional pub setting, The Garden Bar is definitely worth a visit.

The bar and restaurant, on the Birmingham New Road, in Wolverhampton, has not been open long but – when we visited – was already very busy.

Having driven past on numerous occasions on the way to work, I decided to finally try it out with my wife Kelly and our three-year-old daughter, Annabelle.

We were given a lovely little table in the corner, which looked out on to the very impressive beer garden.

The restaurant layout was modern, with neatly arranged tables alongside smaller, more private areas for couples. Large parties and families could easily be catered for, and there were two large-screen TVs showing sport.

VARIETY

When it came to the meal, orders were placed at the bar with customers quoting a table number.

The starters included a wide variety of vegetarian, and meaty options. Many veggies I know would have been delighted with the wide selection.

We went for both veggie and meat options with the aloo tikka chaat, which was potatoes served with chickpea masala, and lollipop chicken, served with a homemade dip.

The main course options included staple Indian favourites such as jalfrezi, madras, saag, bhuna, vindaloo and balti. There was also an extensive house specials menu, which included a wide range of veggie, meat and fish dishes. The biryanis were also classed

Spice up your life – curry with naan bread and rice



specials and looked very tasty. I chose a different house special, north Indian chilli garlic chicken, tempered with fresh chillis and garlic.

If the starter had been a little bit bigger than expected, the mains were the perfect size and came served in a traditional metal curry bowl.

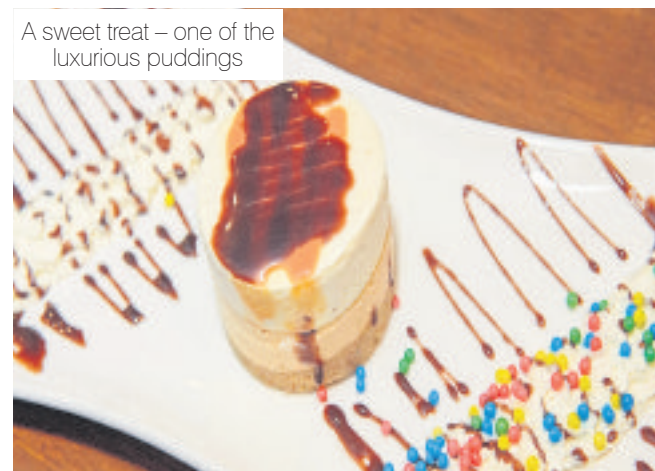
It wasn't the hottest curry I'd ever tasted but it was delightful to get the odd extra kick from the fresh chillis, which had been chopped up and sprinkled over the chicken. The chicken was tender and there was plenty of the sauce to mop up the egg rice and keema naan

we shared. Kelly opted for the rahra gosht, diced spring lamb and mince cooked together. Again, the texture of the sauce was really thick and tasty. I wouldn't like to guess what spices were used in my wife's dish but it's safe to say it was loaded with flavour – perhaps one to avoid for those who like a lighter curry, but we loved it.

If curry isn't for you and you fancy something a bit more like pub grub, the menu also included pub favourites like gammon, beefburgers and steaks.

Having looked at the more traditional children's menu, we decided to try something different with Annabelle

A sweet treat – one of the luxurious puddings



– who is generally an adventurous eater – and ordered a mild chicken korma. After mixing it with the egg fried rice, she lapped up it all.

There were, however, plenty of lovely sweets to choose from for those with a sweet tooth, including the gajar ka halwa, which is an Indian carrot pudding.

The drinks, appetiser, starters, mains and puddings all came in at around £50, so if you fancy a nice meal out in a welcoming environment that isn't going to break the bank, you could do a lot worse than trying out The Garden Bar.

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Honest reliable service

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Station Road, Old Hill, Cradley Heath, B64 6PL



MOT

£27.99
with this advert
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0121 559 6001



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For competitive quotes on all your refurbishment
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PLUMBING & HEATING ENGINEER
Gas Fitting, Boiler Servicing
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Boilers changed
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LOWEST PRICES**
**0121 422 8594 or
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All installations and repairs
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All types of General Repairs
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Also interior and exterior
decorating
Local Friendly Service
0121 532 4861
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Our Specialist Section
offers you a wide range
of local businesses
and tradesmen to deal
with your needs and
requirements.

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1 Call us on...
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2 E-mail us at...
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3 Post to...
Mark Moore, Halesowen Chronicle, Black Lake
Regional Centre, West Bromwich B70 0QB

Local Specialists



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ROOFING SERVICES

One of the Leading Roofing Companies
No Job too Small, No Job too Big

- Gutters Cleaned From £15
- Small Repairs From £15
- Pointing Work From £15

SPECIAL OFFERS
on all UPVC Fascias, Gutters,
New Roofs/Slate Tile & Felt
and Garage Roofs.

- Rubberised flat roofing
- Flat roof specialist
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FREE QUOTES AVAILABLE

**WILL BEAT ANY
GENUINE QUOTE**

**SPECIAL
OFFER
on EPDM
Rubberised
Roofing**



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Mobile: 07584 081228

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Index

- 1 Family
- 2 Leisure Time
- 3 Home & Services
- 4 Pets & Animals
- 5 Business & Farming
- 6 Property
- 7 Jobs
- 8 Motoring
- 9 Local Information
- 10 Personals

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Friday for Monday's advertisement.

1 Family

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WREKIN STAIRLIFTS reconditioned lifts from £795. New available. 01952 405397/07897 273617

2 Leisure Time

Caravans Wanted

CARAVAN WANTED
Can collect asap.
Call me on 07717 090817.

All Caravans Wanted
Any Age or Condition
*CASH * WAITING*
Immediate collection
Call Bill on 07825 325 913

Caravans/ Motorhomes

3 BEDROOM STATIC caravan for sale. 12 month season. Seaside location. Great facilities. Pet friendly. wifi. £14,995. Call Paul for information: 07960 944721.



NEW PARK HOME
Sited at Highley, 15 minutes drive from Bewdley/Bridgnorth.
40 x 20, 2 bedrooms.
£130,000.
07774 715830.



VOLKSWAGEN CARAVANETTE
B Registration, 55,000 miles, MoT'd, excellent condition.
£5,500.
01902 713064.

mind, body & soul

Massage

MOBILE Aromatherapy Massage
Therapist Home / Hotel. To book appointments call 07437 569187.

what's on

Antique Fairs

BOOK FAIR Kinner Community Centre, DY7 6ER, inc postcards. Sunday 19th October, Est 1979, Waverley. Next antique Fair 3rd December. Home made refreshments. Call 0121 550 4381

★ ANTIQUE/ COLLECTORS VINTAGE FAIR ★
CORNBOW HALL, HAGLEY STREET, HALESOWEN, B63 3AT
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 17TH
8:30 AM - 15:00 PM
07783 680 627

3 Home & Services

MASSIVE £1,000,000 AUTUMN STOCK CLEARANCE
LOUNGE SUITES - BIGGEST SELECTION TO GO IN YOUR HOME BEFORE CHRISTMAS

All Fashion Beds - Sleigh Beds, Metal, Iron and Ottoman Beds

PLUS UPTO 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT (SUBJECT TO STATUS)

BROOKLYN 3 SEATER SOFA IN GREY, CHESTNUT & CAPPUCINO WAS £979 **NOW £499**
2 SEATER ALSO AVAILABLE WAS £749 **NOW £399**
MAJESTIC EXTRA DEEP ORTHO DIVAN IN LUXURY BELGIAN SHINY DAMASK 3FT MATTRESS WAS £179 **NOW £99**
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LOLA FABRIC CORNER SOFA WAS £999 **NOW £600**
60% OFF SAVE £600 **NOW £399**

HUNDREDS OF BEDFRAMES, DIVANS & MATTRESSES TO TAKE AWAY
SINGLE MATT FROM **£39**
DOUBLE MATT FROM **£59**
KING MATT FROM **£79**
METAL FRAME BUNK BED IN SILVER COMPLETE WITH 2 QUALITY SPRUNG MATTRESSES WAS £399 **1/2 PRICE £199**

100'S OF LEATHER & FABRIC SOFAS, CORNER SUITES AND RECLINER SUITES - MANY HALF PRICE
Open Everyday 10am-5.30pm **OPEN SUNDAY 10AM - 4PM**

BFC FACTORY OUTLET
CONEYGRE ROAD IND EST, GREAT BRIDGE RD, TIPTON DY4 8XF.
OFF A461 2 MINS FROM NEW TESCO & TOBY CARVERY
0121 557 6885
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BED 5FT KINGSIZE
Luxury 10 inch deep memory foam mattress, divan base. Excellent quality, unused. Cost over £1,000. Accept £275. Telephone 07787 636984.

Items Wanted
AUTO MEMORABILIA WANTED
SHELL, ESSO, CASTROL ETC
ALSO
GARAGE CLEARANCES
Old Enamel Signs, Petrol Cans, Old Jugs, Bikes and Motorbikes. Anything old.
**** TOP PRICES PAID ****
01384 836219/07891 713547

G-PLAN leather, Wine, three seater, two seater + footstool, electric recliner on both. Immaculate. £500. 01902 884789/ 07981 289526.

Items Wanted

A BEST CASH PRICE
FOR ALL RAILWAY COLLECTIONS
Any gauge or age
Hornby/Bachmann/Bowmans/ Roundhouse/Graham/Farsh/ any live steam. Also Die Cast, Corgi, Dinky, Spot On.
01384 836219/07891 713547
thetrainmaster67@hotmail.com

COINS, MEDALS, BANK NOTES
Wanted by private collector.
Telephone 01902 676540.

OLD BIBLES Wanted, pre 1900, for Private buyer. Fair prices paid. Distance no object. Telephone 0115 973 5662.

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

WANTED
VINTAGE TAMIYA REMOTE CONTROL MODELS

Also any old radio controlled models in any condition, Mardave, Kyocho, Traxxas, HPI Team Associated, Schumacher
Big or small collections bought.
07568 585075 or 0121 532 2544.

WANTED HORNBY train sets, locos, coaches and trucks. Good condition. Cash paid. Will collect. 01562 829537.

In Your Garden
HARDWOOD DOUBLE driveway gates, width 5ft x 2, height 5ft. £225. 01902 894372.

Collectables & Memorabilia

LARGE MOOCROFT pottery collection for sale. To contact call or leave message on 07890 898640.

Furniture

BACK LEATHER Corner Suite. Excellent condition. £700 ono. Must collect. 07547 591779. Dudley.

Household Appliances

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For items up to £250.
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All areas covered
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Over 35 years exp
All aspects of building work
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QUALITY DOORS AND HARDWOOD FLOORING @ low prices.
Call Arnold Laver 0121 533 5428.

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PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
10 Bays of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards. **£695**
Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.
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DELIVERY AVAILABLE
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CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

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12 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

Rubbish Removal

LETS TALK RUBBISH No Skips Needed/Load/Remove any Waste, House Clearance. 07969 628382

Roofing

GOLDEN LAB Pedigree puppies, dogs and bitches available. From SH CH lines, ready to go. £500. 07938 598881.

We specialise in:
New Roofing, Re Roofing, Leak Repairs, Emergency Repairs, Lead Work, Tiling and Slatting.

07476 834512 0121 4204374
www.stoppsandpage.co.uk

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CLAIM YOUR FREE ADVERT
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Call Claire Smith: 01902 319661
claire.smith@expressandstar.co.uk

ROSEDENE RESCUE CENTRE
1, Radley Road, Rushall,
Walsall, WS4 1LN.
01922 627013.
Open Monday to Saturday
11am - 5pm.
Sundays - Bank Holidays
11am - 4pm.
Takes in relinquished dogs
from owners, all areas (if they
are vet checked up to date with
jabs.)
Donations of dog food, toys,
bedding and vet bills always
appreciated.

Equestrian Corner

ALL READERS are advised to
check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies
have the required Passport infor-
mation.

GRAZING AVAILABLE
Sedgley
01902 883037.

Guns & Dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that
they meet all necessary legal
requirements for owning and using
guns.

5
Business & Farming

Business Opportunities

READERS are recommended to
take appropriate professional
advice before entering into any
obligations.

6
Property

Accommodation To Let

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek
independent legal advice before
entering into any financial commit-
ments/contracts.

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accom-
modation Agencies Act 1953, for an
Agency to charge a fee simply for
the registration of your require-
ments and/or supplying particulars
of premises to let.

A COMFORTABLE FURNISHED
room for single, mature, working
person, CH, TV, cleaning, linen, all
bills £275pcm, no DSS. Stafford
Road, Wton. 07957 595840.

ONE BED furnished flat, kitchen,
bathroom, parking, gardens, one
mile to W-ton. 01902 883037.

SINGLE FLAT suit mature Gent,
refurbished throughout, all up to
spec. Gornal area. £90 p/w. Call
0771 560357.

SMART SINGLE ROOMS
in Shared house, Netherton. £85
p.w. inc. bills. No DSS. 2 weeks
deposit. 07940 116130.

**BUY LOCAL
SELL LOCAL**
01902 317878

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Properties Wanted

**WE PAY 100% of purchase price
FAST 4 Your House CASH**

You agree the price, we buy the house...

- NO AGENTS FEES • COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU
- FREE SOLICITORS • ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION

**0800 999 999 6
01384 500 500** **30 yrs**

www.black-countryhomes.co.uk * subject to terms

CASH NOW FOR YOUR HOUSE

£25,000 CASH ADVANCE NOW (in 24hrs)

Free Solicitors • No Fees • Any House • Any Condition

0800 389 6788 01902 628047

Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week Terms applicable

Need to sell your house quick?

WE WILL BUY YOUR HOME...

FAST FOR CASH

Guaranteed sale in **48 Hours**

- ✓ 100% of cash value paid
- ✓ No Commission
- ✓ All Legal Fees Paid

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Yes! HOME BUYERS
THE EASY WAY TO SELL YOUR HOUSE

We Buy Houses For Cash

Free Valuation? Yes! No Fees? Yes! Any Location? Yes!
Fast Sale? Yes! Any House? Yes! Any Condition? Yes!

Get your **FREE**, instant cash offer today!

Call **0121 663 1403**
or text "Cash" to 66777 **yeshomebuyers.com**

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- Any Price • Any Condition • Any Area

Call Paula 01384 467643

We are not connected to any other advertiser

www.webuyhouseswestmidlands.co.uk

7 Jobs

Employment Wanted

BUILDER REQUIRES Employment,
all aspects of building, bricklaying,
block paving, landscaping, fencing,
garden walls. 07539 988217.

EXPERIENCED BRICK LAYER
requires any type of brick work.
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FENCING AND GATES 25 years
experience, own tools and trans-
port. Seeks full / part time work
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30 NOV - 1 DEC. & 27 - 28 JAN.
STOKE ON TRENT: 17 - 18 JAN.

WOLVERHAMPTON:
6 - 7 DEC. & 8 - 9 MARCH
TELFORD: 25 - 26 JAN.

**Learn how to take blood
TRAIN AS A PHLEBOTOMIST**

NATIONALLY RECOGNISED AND ACCREDITED
Introduction to Phlebotomy
TWO DAY COURSE - National UK Qualification
NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

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HIGH DEMAND IN: Hospitals - GP Surgeries - Clinics - Private Sector - Community - MOD

8 Motoring

Cars Over £1500

FIAT QUBO
2010, 29,500 Miles, black, elec-
tric windows, air bag, fish, MoT,
auto, central locking, pas,
diesel, tax, Stereo, wheelchair
access at rear
£3,850
01384370462

FORD FIESTA ZEETC
2007, TDCi 64,000 miles, blue,
abs, electric windows, electric
mirrors, FSH, alarm long Mot.
Excellent condition.
£1,995
01902 744023

FORD FIESTA GHIA
1.4, 80,600 miles, Ford Service
History, electric windows,
electric mirror, MoT February
2018, leather trim, 1 owner,
nice condition.
£1,600 ono.
07958 400177.

MINI COOPER 1.6
Mint condition inside and out.
2004, low mileage, MoT 2018,
black, service history, alloys,
black and red sports seats.
£2,450.
07946 383970.

MINI ONE
1.4 engine ideal first car 2008,
127,000 Miles, Cream , electric
windows, air bag, electric
mirrors, alarm, long MoT,
central locking, pas, Stereo, CD
£1,950
07538 201939

4X4
NISSAN NAVARA PICK UP
57 reg.
Electric blue.
Long MoT.
Runs great.
Very tidy body.
Chassis passed by Nissan.
Used daily.
£3,800.
01952 582318 / 07974
031454.

PEUGEOT 206CC ALLURE
2005, 55 plate 4,600 miles,
blue, abs, electric windows,
electric mirrors, air con, full
service history alarm, MoT.
Lovely condition.
£1,495.
01902 744023.

PEUGEOT 206CC ALLURE
2005, 55 plate 4,600 miles,
blue, abs, electric windows,
electric mirrors, air con, full
service history alarm, MoT.
Lovely condition.
£1,495.
01902 744023.

PEUGEOT 206CC ALLURE
2005, 55 plate 4,600 miles,
blue, abs, electric windows,
electric mirrors, air con, full
service history alarm, MoT.
Lovely condition.
£1,495.
01902 744023.

PEUGEOT 206CC ALLURE
2005, 55 plate 4,600 miles,
blue, abs, electric windows,
electric mirrors, air con, full
service history alarm, MoT.
Lovely condition.
£1,495.
01902 744023.

PEUGEOT 206CC ALLURE
2005, 55 plate 4,600 miles,
blue, abs, electric windows,
electric mirrors, air con, full
service history alarm, MoT.
Lovely condition.
£1,495.
01902 744023.

VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6SE
2010, 45,600 miles, petrol,
silver, abs, electric windows,
electric mirrors, air con, fish,
long MoT, running lights, auto
dim rear mirror.
£4,375.
01902 339471.

MUST BE SEEN
VAUXHALL CORSA
2013, 5-dr, silver, 1.2 petrol,
mileage 31,700, MoT Feb 2018,
excellent condition.
£4,150. o.n.o
01746 789551.
(Bridgnorth)

1ST TO SEE WILL BUY
VAUXHALL ZAFRIA
1.9CDTi Design Model
55 reg, 106,000 miles only,
150bhp, electric windows, elec-
tric mirrors, half leather, black,
alloys, black, been remapped,
10 months MoT, well locked
after, lots of history,
£1,750.
07544 370350

VOLKSWAGEN FOX 1.2
Three door.
Hatchback.
2010 (60 reg).
Red. Petrol.
Manual. MoT November 2018.
Insurance Group 1.
66,000 miles.
Two keys.
Excellent condition.
£2,195 ono.
07871 521216.

AUTOMATIC
VOLVO S40
2007, 57 plate, 30,000 miles,
silver, EW, AC, MoT June 2018,
automatic, CL, CC.
Genuine reason for sale.
£3,750.
07538 651604.

Cars Under £1500
BMW COMPACT 1999, 64,000
Miles, blue, abs, electric windows,
air bag, fish, MoT, long MoT, one
owner £950 ono 07980 379267.

CITROEN XSARA PICASSO
2007,(57) 71,000 Miles s/h,
new MoT, lovely condition.
£1,200 ono
07572 554829.

BARGAIN
FORD FOCUS
1.8 DIESEL
2005, 114k miles, 3dr, silver, 12
months MoT, service history,
reliable, good condition.
Excellent value
£1,150.
07979 472572.

GOOD RUNNER
HYUNDAI I30 COMFORT 1.6
CRDi ESTATE
2009, 54,125 miles, grey, alloy
wheels, front fog lights, radio /
CD / MP3, USB Ipod and Aux
connectivity and power
sockets, MoT till March.
£2,450.
01384 291964. 07505 912159.

QUAD BIKE
AEON CROSSLAND 320CC
2016. White.
Automatic.
Road legal. Only 2,180 miles.
Excellent condition.
£2,500.
07510 294326.

LANDROVER FREELANDER
2002 TD4 ES
DIESEL AUTO
Very good condition.
90,700mils, serviced regularly,
Dark Red Met, leather Interior,
recent new tyres, MoT,
same owner for 13years.
£1,250.
07758 746263.

LOOK
MG GT
1972, for restoration.
£575
MG ROADSTER
1972 for restoration including
new body panels.
£1,475
07828 196505.

1ST TO SEE WILL BUY
PEUGEOT 206
WS ESTATE 1400
2004.
Very reliable.
Very clean and Tidy.
Good runner.
MoT'd.
Quick sale £695ono.
01902 862610.

RENAULT SCENIC DTI 1.5.
2008.
83,000 miles,
Silver,
Good condition,
Full MoT.
£1,250 ono.
07816 435725.

1ST TO SEE WILL BUY
ROVER 45 CONNOISSEUR
2003, 70,000 miles, silver,
abs, electric windows, air bag,
electric mirrors, air con, alarm,
MoT, long MoT, auto,
metallic paint, central locking,
pas, sunroof
£750
07703 460744.

BARGAIN
VW GOLF GTI
Mark 3
1997, 2.0, 5dr hatchback, low
mileage, long MoT, CD
player, garage maintained,
appreciating classic,
£850 ono.
07716 376510.

Classic Cars
WANTED, CLASSIC Car. Private
cash buyer. Any condition, anything
considered.
01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

Motorbikes
NORTON JUBILEE 250 Twin, 1966,
restoration project, £750 ono.
SOLD.

QUAD BIKE
AEON CROSSLAND 320CC
2016. White.
Automatic.
Road legal. Only 2,180 miles.
Excellent condition.
£2,500.
07510 294326.

Scrap Vehicles
OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded
that it is an offence under the Scrap
Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy
scrap cars/metal for cash.

ABC AUTO SALVAGE
WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best
Prices Paid ELV Registered
Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or
0121 557 0400.
Oldbury Area.

Vehicles Wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best
price for your unwanted cars/vans.
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Sporty touches but a family lugger

By Ian Donaldson

Years before Peugeot bought Vauxhall earlier this year the two companies had been working together behind the scenes – on the car you're now looking at, for one.

Or looking at it if you had X-ray eyes. For the new Vauxhall Grandland X appears nothing like Peugeot's recent 3008 but beneath their unalike metalwork is more or less the same car.

Same platform (the really expensive bit to design), same engines and same factory – they're both built in France. Starting from pretty well the same price too; £22,495 Peugeot plays £22,310 Vauxhall.

Booming

So why would Vauxhall bother? Well, the SUV market has gone daft for new models in recent years and the Grandland X is predicted to be the company's second biggest seller to private buyers, behind only the Corsa.

With a recent downturn in new car sales only one area is still booming. Yes, you've guessed; it's the medium-sized SUV market where the Grandland X now appears.

As well as taking on the sister-under-the-skin Peugeot 3008 the Grandland X is up against the formidable Nissan Qashqai, the biggest seller by far and confidently expected to stay that way, even by its competitors.

So what strengths does Vauxhall bring to the mid-sized SUV party? Well, it's clear how Vauxhall wants us to view its new baby, with so many uses of the word 'sporty' in the press presentation you soon lost count.

Oh, and the creases on the side let you feel 'speed and acceleration', according to its



There's plenty of space for luggage

designer. And the front is upright and proud. Don't you just love designer-speak.

Judge for yourself, of course, but you might agree the end result is a car that looks neat and modern and hides quite nicely its purpose in life, to transport a growing family and their luggage in some comfort and at not too high a price.

Talking prices, the Grandland X starts with Tech Line trim from the already mentioned £22,310, with 1.2 litre 128 bhp petrol engine, moves through SE (£22,485) and Sport Nav (£24,595) to the ultimate version, Elite Nav which starts at £26,660.

Engine choices are currently limited to the 1.2 litre petrol and a 1.6 litre with the same bhp but much more pulling power, as is the way with diesels. Automatic transmissions are optional with either.

Vauxhall thinks most buyers will take the petrol route, where they'll find a willing power unit that takes the Grandland X to 117mph and to 62mph in 11.1 seconds, while returning an



The car looks neat and modern and does its job well in transporting a growing family

official 52.3mpg and 124g/km in the official tests.

Take a dearer diesel and those figures are 117mph and 11.8 seconds – much the same as the petrol model, but with much better promised economy at 70.6mpg average and less pollution too, with 104g/km.

Whichever engine you choose there's quite a bit of car to pull along, measuring 4,477mm long. A benefit is a boot that takes 514 litres with the rear seats in place and a more than useful 1,652 with them folded.

But you must open a door and slip behind the wheel to discover the biggest difference between the Peugeot and Vauxhall approach to family motoring with dashboards that show divergent design philosophies.

Where the Peugeot is an exercise in button denying modernity the Grandland X looks more conventionally smart, with less pressing of fingers on screens and more physical contact with switches.

And all the better for it, I'd say, as you try to adjust the radio to knock the cabin

temperature down a degree or two. Out on the road the Grandland X feels anything but sporty, the petrol engine doing its best and staying quietly in the background but a long way from inspiring you to take the long way home.

Should you encounter slippery roads on the way there's an option of IntelliGrip traction control that does its best to mimic four-wheel drive by managing the power going to the front wheels; there won't be a 4x4 because the customers don't want it, says Vauxhall.

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SEAT's Ibiza won't break the bank!

By John Griffiths

Out on the streets there's a familiar face – but don't be fooled.

SEAT's new supermini is clearly an Ibiza but this is no midlife makeover. It's a completely new car. While it in some ways shares the familiar outline of its predecessor, the new car's more edgy styling in fact owes a lot to its big brother, the Leon.

Plus it's on the brand new MBQ-Ao platform (the first car in the VW Audi Group to benefit from this radical step forward), and it will be built alongside the Audi A1.

While it is slightly shorter on the outside, inside it's considerably bigger than the outgoing model because its wheelbase has been stretched, benefitting ride and handling but also adding 35mm extra legroom in the rear, taking it to the top of the class.

Plus there's a generous for the class 355 litres of boot space, if you opt for the version with a tyre repair kit and electric inflator instead of a full-size spare wheel.

There is a range of petrol-only engines offering power outputs from 75 to 115PS all with lively performance and economy of around the 50mpg mark. There's no diesel option, but with SEAT's history of creating sporty models you won't be surprised that a 1.5TSI (another new VW Group engine) is coming soon in the 150PS Evo version.

Prices start from £13,130 for the entry level S model, but SEAT expects the best seller to be the better equipped SE, from £14,000 to £14,595 according to engine choice.

At the top of the range the tree splits in to two branches – the sportily themed FR and the luxury Xcellence, the flagship topping out at £17,310.

Bearing in mind equipment levels, interior

space and new levels of refinement the new Ibiza poses a serious, value for money challenge to some of its big rivals like the Ford Fiesta and Vauxhall Corsa.

Not that the Ibiza has been slow out of the showrooms: it's played a major part in SEAT's 30 per cent increase in sales over the past four years, making the Spanish company one of the fastest growing brands in the UK.

The three 'standard' engines are all based on the (fairly) new 1.0 litre, three cylinder turbocharged petrol unit, which has already impressed on the larger, heavier VW Golf.

Similar engines seem to be taking over the small car sector and, if you've tried one, that won't be a surprise. It isn't just the horsepower they produce (compared to normally aspirated units), it's the extra, hefty levels of torque thanks to turbocharging which means livelier performance at relatively low revs.

Then, as you get towards motorway cruising speeds it's the ability to keep up with the flow of traffic at lower revs, lower noise levels and greatly increased refinement. It feels like a non-turbo engine of 1600 or even 1800cc in a quality midrange family car.

Most manufacturers have now realised the benefits of what are incredibly efficient little engines, capable of lively performance, increased economy and low CO2 levels.

The chosen test car was an SE version with the middle (95ps) engine, which at £14,595 is likely to be one of the biggest-selling new Ibizas. For the record, it's 0 to 62mph sprint time is a quick 10.9 seconds while its official fuel average is 60.1mpg, with a low 106g/km of CO2 and an affordable group 5E insurance rating.

That's significantly quicker, yet more economical, than the 75PS non-turbo power plant in the basic model. But of course the

figures don't tell the whole story: it's that more relaxed and refined driving experience which gives the car a grown-up feel. The 175Nm of torque at just 1,500rpm – for the sake of comparison that's nearly double the pulling power of a conventional one litre car from the same group, and a much lower revs, too.

As well as more leg room, the new Ibiza is 87mm wider than its predecessor which, together with the extra legroom, makes the back rather more comfortable for three passengers (although the centre 'seat' is rather firmer and narrower than the outer two).

Inside, the cabin has taken a big step forward with improved design, higher quality materials and additional instruments and equipment. The centre console is dominated by a five-inch touchscreen multi media system (with remote controls duplicated on the steering wheel). The car also comes with aircon, Bluetooth, a full safety package including multiple airbags, ABS, tyre pressure monitoring, stability programme, emergency brake assist and hill hold assist, LED lights, front fog lights with cornering function, electric front windows, trip computer and 15-inch alloy wheels.

Higher up the range, the FR and Xcellence benefit from multiple driving modes (from eco to sport), electrically folding mirrors and upgraded upholstery and trim. The FR also has sports suspension.

The SE test car's suspension, combined with the engineering benefits from the new platform and longer wheelbase (with shorter overhangs) makes even this non-sports version a fun to drive supermini. Its optimum damping provided a smooth, quiet ride over some of the rougher roads on the Welsh test run. Yet at the same time its dynamic performance is impressive: the Ibiza's turn-in



The new car has more edgy styling than the outgoing model

is quick and accurate, and it runs through the quicker bends with confidence-inspiring stability and an absence of body roll.

Of course there will be those who opt for the even more dynamic FR – which you'll have to do if you want the more top-powered 1.5TSI, 150PS engine, only available in this specification.

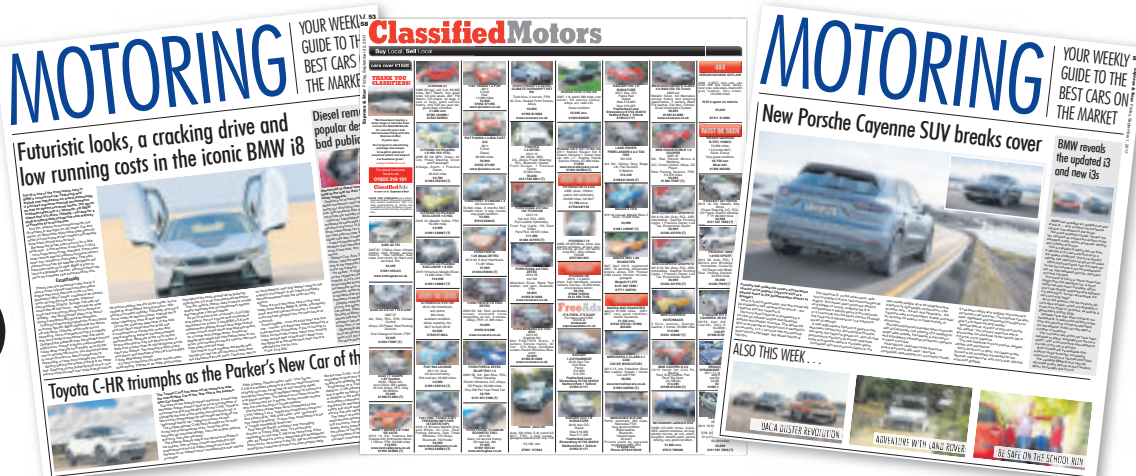
The Ibiza story goes back to 1984 and in its four generations so far it has been a mainstay of SEAT's sales. The new generation model

is bigger inside, has a much-improved interior and more equipment than ever. Plus SEAT hasn't thrown the baby out with the bathwater – the company has always enjoyed something of a fun, sporty reputation and the new model certainly won't disappoint in that aspect, even though its engine range has reached new levels of efficiency.

If you're in the market for a good supermini that won't break the bank, it's worth booking a test drive.

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Some of the award winners at the ceremony at the Copthorne Hotel



Abbie Hinton from the School of the Year



Aspiring Athlete winner Freya Robson



Opening winner Greg Southall



Power of Sport winner Natty Blewitt



Coach of the Year Wayne McDonald and Diane Davies, Express & Star

Region's sports stars honoured at ceremony

INSPIRATIONAL tales of determination, grit and teamwork emerged as the winners were revealed at this year's Black Country Sport and Physical Activity Awards.

Ten awards were handed out on the night recognising the achievements and contributions of athletes, coaches, sport clubs and volunteers.

A total of 35 finalists were in the running for the awards, run by Active Black Country.

Former women's England Rugby player Maggie Alphonsi MBE was special guest and gave an inspirational speech about her journey from being born with a clubfoot to lifting the Rugby Union World Cup in 2014.

ACB vice chairman Amanda Tomlinson kicked off the ceremony, at the Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill. She said: "The Black Country has got a wide and diverse history. We are defined by our people."

"The levels of deprivation in the Black Country are significant and physical inactivity is highest here across the region. People are not getting the benefits of sport, which is quite worrying and significant. But sport has got the power to change this."

Project

The first award of the night went to Dudley Disability Swimming Project for Sportivate Project of the Decade. The group runs swimming sessions for young disabled people, where more than 20 attend each week. Funding ran out over a year ago but organisers have been able to keep the project afloat.

Next up was Tividale Football Academy which won Community Club of the Year. The club was praised for forging strong links with local schools and the police and helping to change young people's lives for good through the power of football.

Tividale has 350 youngsters in its ranks and more than 40 volunteers across 24 teams.

Keith Thompson, from the club, said: "It is a fantastic achievement, for the volunteers, players and everybody else involved with the club."

School of the Year was won by the Federation of Abbey Infant & Abbey Junior Schools in Sandwell with representative Abbie Hinton picking up the award on its behalf. The school was praised for its PE

SPORTING FEATURE

By Ben Lammas

"The Black Country has got a wide and diverse history. We are defined by our people."

curriculum which helped children with their moral, spiritual and cultural development. Abbie Hinton, from the school, said it was a great achievement to win the award.

The Community Impact Award went to Benson Community Project in Smethwick. The initiative has helped to engage more than 1,000 residents in different activities, boost the relationship between police and youths and help young people get into work and join football teams.

Paul Landucci said: "I'm astonished and amazed we have won this award. Smethwick itself should be winning this award. It's about people who love what they do."

The Coach of the Year award went to judo teacher Wayne McDonald. Wayne has taught judo for 13 years and recently developed his coaching skills by teaching visually impaired youngsters at the annual British Blind Sport Day. He was praised for being a positive role model who is always willing to help. Wayne trains beginners at school and community clubs and coaches at competition up and down the country.

The Aspiring Talent award went to Freya Robson, who is a second-dan black belt in karate. Freya has won three medals for England and recently achieved gold in the under-21 kata competition at the Wado European Championships in Paris.

Practising karate has helped give her social skills and the ability to focus and she now teaches karate after recently qualifying as a junior coach.

She said: "There is a lot more that goes into sport than just training and competition. There is a lot more people that have helped me than they realise."

Community Rangers FC picked up the Satellite Club of the Year award as part of an initiative called 'Football for All'.

Rangers set up a satellite club, with Sporting Equals, at Dudley Goals Soccer Centre to work with hard to reach groups from mosques and schools. The project has seen an increase of youngsters and their families get on board which has resulted in a base of volunteers.

The Power of Sport award went to Natty Blewitt, who is bound to a wheelchair. But Natty, who found being active a challenge, joined a 5km runners group for beginners.

She found the route challenging but showed great resilience and identified routes more suitable. Now her group has moved to flatter ground to enable her and others in wheelchairs to take part.

She said: "I'm really astonished to win the award. All of this has made a big change to my life. Just a few years ago I weighed over 20 stone but I have since lost nine stone."

Acelya Toprak won Sports Personality of the Year. She has been performing at the highest level of judo for more than 10 years and is now moving up to senior level. She has won three gold medals, two silver and one bronze competing at European events, all while studying for a degree.

Support

The Unsung Hero award went to John Totney and Martin Floyd, who in the past two years have tallied up 1,400 hours, or 58 days, of voluntary work supporting disabled people at Portway Lifestyle Centre in Oldbury.

John, now retired, has been in the role since 2013. Martin, who was born with spina bifida and hydrocephalus and is in a wheelchair, became a volunteer after visiting the gym. They each give 20 hours of their time a week.

The final award of the night was the Elvis Gordon Chair's Recognition Award which went to Black Country Talent Match, a project which helps disadvantaged young people into work and use sport and physical activity as one of the routes.

Darren Harris, from the project, said: "Sport is not just about the physical benefits but the mental health benefits too."

Young kickboxer Ellie shows she is all Hart

THE Hart School in Rugeley is celebrating the success of one of its students, who has been invited to join the Great British Kickboxing Team.

Ellie Harvey, aged 12, represented Great Britain at the WAKO Junior European Championships held in Skopje in Macedonia.

Thirty-seven countries competed in this prestigious event, with a total of 1,600 competitors selected to represent their respective age and weight categories. Ellie fought in the under-12s section, competing against older and significantly taller girls, dominating at many stages of the competition and refusing to surrender to her opponents. After a tense semi-final she lost out by two points, but earned herself a bronze medal.

Holly Hartley, acting executive principal of the Hart School, said: "Ellie's accomplishments are outstanding, her determination and resilience set an example to us all. We are all very proud of this young lady, and are sure we will see her representing her country at an even higher level, in the not-so-distant future."

Merse enjoys sharing Molineux memories

FORMER Arsenal, Villa and Walsall midfielder Paul Merson told stories about his glittering playing career to help raise funds for the Steve Bull Foundation.

Merson, equally famous for his role as a pundit on Sky Sports, teamed up with the legendary Wolves striker to entertain a captivated audience of football fans at Molineux.

The 49-year-old, who also had a spell managing Saddlers, told stories about his trophy-laden time at Arsenal and also commented on the 21 caps he won for England and discussed his television career.

He admitted enjoying his time back at Molineux.

"I have known Billy and his wife Kirsty a long time so when they asked me to come up and help out it wasn't a problem at all," he said.

"They are good people who do a lot of work for charity. It's great to help them and great for me personally to be back at Molineux. I got a standing ovation here one day when I played for Villa in a pre-season friendly."

Legends turn out for sick keeper Dudley

FORMER stars of Albion and Villa have agreed to dust off their boots in a benefit match for ex-goalkeeper Derek Dudley. Dudley, who spent four years at Villa in the 1980s and also played for the Baggies, is terminally ill at the age of just 47.

Members of Villa's 1982 European Cup-winning side Gordon Cowans, Nigel Spink, Pat Heard, Tony Morley and Peter Withe will line up alongside Albion heroes Richard Sneekes and Bob Taylor in the Midlands Legends team taking on Romulus Veterans at Sutton Coldfield Town on Sunday.

Former Villa men Julian Joachim, Darren Byfield, Lee Hendrie and Tony Daley will also be in attendance. Dudley lives in Rugeley with his wife Helen and two children Daniel, 13, and Elizabeth, 11.

Admission is priced at £3 for adults; £1 children; and a family ticket for two adults and two children is £5. Those in attendance are invited back for refreshments and an auction at The Yenton pub, Sutton Road, Wyde Green. All proceeds will go directly to Dudley and his family.



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Glassboys go through, but ref under fire

St Neots Town 2 Stourbridge 3
STOURBRIDGE fought hard to win this second qualifying round tie and a trip to Bradford Park Avenue on December 2. However, Stuart Pierpoint and Aaron Forde picked up bookings which will see two key players out of the Glassboys next league game at Shae Lane. And boss Gary Hackett was far from happy with the referee. "It was a competitive game spoiled by the referee who seemed to have no control, and made some poor decisions for both sides," he said.

In front of a crowd of 323, all the goals were scored in the second half, with three coming in the opening five minutes.

St Neots hit Stourbridge just a minute after the break when a neat flick by Tom Meechan found Dion Sembie-Ferris whose shot bounced over Matt Gould and into the net. Almost immediately the Glassboys were on terms when a corner from Tom Tonks was headed in by Leon Broadhurst.

Aris Christophorou was brought down on 54 minutes in the area and Luke Benbow gave Stourbridge the lead from the spot, his third goal in two games.

Benbow, looking fully fit now after his recent move from Solihull, shot wide on 70 but then produced a clever short free kick six minutes later into the path of substitute Josh Green whose excellent shot flew in. Jack Bradshaw bundled in a scrappy goal on 82 minutes.

Midfielder Will Marsh, signed on loan from AFC Telford on Friday made his debut as a second half substitute.

Point in safe hands on Platt's 100th Yeltz appearance

Halesowen Town 0 Shaw Lane AFC 0
HALESOWEN settled for a hard-earned point in a stalemate against a strong Shaw Lane outfit.

The high-flying Ducks started on the front foot, fresh from their recent FA Cup exploits, as Alexander Byrne's 25-yard free-kick was tipped over by home keeper Dan Platt after just two minutes. Platt continued to keep the visitors at bay on his 100th Yeltz appearance.

But Halesowen gradually weathered the storm and had their first chance after 18 minutes when Dan Udoh's low shot was kept out by goalkeeper Jonathan Stewart. Udoh then laid the ball off for John McAtee, but his low shot was saved at the foot of his post by Stewart in the 35th minute.

Udoh set Alexander Woodhouse free to cross for Bradley Lewis to head just high early in the second half and McAtee scuffed a 69th minute shot wide.

With five minutes remaining, a low shot from Halesowen's Enoch Ekong was gathered by Stewart but home defender Marcus Poscha cleared off the line in the final minute.

Harris races to hat-trick of awards



Luke Harris - award treble

LUKE Harris was the most decorated rider at Cradley's End of Season Presentation.

The 18-year-old walked away with three trophies to cap off a fine year for the youngster.

Harris received the Wayne Garratt Memorial Trophy for Most Improved Rider, the Max Cartwright Memorial Shield and comfortably secured the Most Bonus Points award.

Harris said: "It's been a great year and to have three awards to show for it feels brilliant."

"I've got my head down this year, I've shown everyone what I can actually do and it's nice to see the fans appreciate it."

While Harris claimed the most awards, it was skipper Tom Perry who received the most prestigious trophy available. Club supporters voted

Perry as their rider of the year as he picked up the Ivor Hughes Memorial Trophy.

"I had to get a round of drinks in because I bet someone that Danny Ayres would win it no problem," Perry joked.

"But on a serious note it's a great honour to be Cradley's rider of the season and it means a lot to be voted for it by the fans."

DEPLETED SIDE IN HEAVY LOSS

OLD Hales first team travelled to Sandbach with a heavily changed and depleted side to lose out 109-0 in a very-much one-sided affair.

Hales will visit Dudley Kingswinford in the cup tonight (Thursday), kick-off 7.45 pm.

It was another tough day at the office for the Second XV as they went down 50-12 to Syston 2nds at Wassell Grove.

With injuries continuing to make selection difficult a number of players from the third team were asked to step up again, with several players making their debuts at this level.

Old Hales enjoyed good possession and territory in the first half but the visitors were much more clinical in attack and scored a number of breakaway tries. Old Hales were rewarded for their efforts when Matt Sidaway crashed over for a try. However Syston took a healthy 22-5 lead into the break.

Dominating

The second half continued in much the same way as the first with Old Hales forwards dominating the scrum and making yards through strong carries from Tom Tarte, Jim Stevenson and Dave Hunt.

Syston opened the scoring in the second half but Old Hales hit back when Hunt carried to within a metre of the line before Tony Shaw went over from close range.

A number of injuries then took their toll and with several players having to play out of position in the backline the Syston backs took full advantage and ran in a number of scores in the final quarter to run out comfortable winners.

● Hales welcomed locals Dudley Kings to Wassell Grove on a bitter cold afternoon. Old Hales started well and were leading 17-0 with some great phased Rugby. DK regrouped and targeted the home side's weak positions to great success, going on to win by 62-24.

Varnish to sue in landmark case



The legal action by Halesowen rider Jess Varnish could have serious repercussions

BLACK COUNTRY Olympian Jess Varnish is expected to sue UK Sport and British Cycling, in what could be a landmark legal case.

Reports revealed the 26-year-old's action will be based on claims she suffered sex discrimination, detriment for whistleblowing, victimisation and unfair dismissal.

Former Halesowen Cycling Club rider Varnish, who competed on the track in the 2012 London Games, was dropped from British Cycling's elite programme last year.

But her claims against then technical director Shane Sutton led to his resignation, after he was found to have used sexist language towards her. Varnish claims Sutton told her to 'go and have a baby' - an allegation he denies. It emerged earlier this year Varnish was con-

sidering legal action against British Cycling, though the claim has since been expanded to include UK Sport.

An application by the latter organisation to have the case dismissed was rejected by a judge last week, meaning Varnish can now proceed with an employment tribunal.

A preliminary hearing in April next year will determine whether Varnish should be considered as having effectively been an employee of UK Sport and British Cycling while competing.

The decision could have serious ramifications for all contracted British athletes funded by UK Sport. If they are officially considered employees, UK Sport would have to pay pension and national insurance costs. Athletes are not currently regarded as members of staff.

Hales add to batting with Myers' return

HALESOWEN Cricket Club have added to the acquisition of former Worcestershire CCC all rounder Alexei Kervezee from Bromsgrove by bringing Jack Myers back to the club.

The club wasted no time in bolstering their batting line-up for the 2018 season with the return of Myers, a right-handed hard-hitting middle order batsman who played for Old Elizabethans CC as well as Burghill and Tillington CC in the 2017 season due to his work placements. He scored 392 runs at 39.00.

However, he returns to Wassell Grove in 2018 with the club looking forward to him repeating his Halesowen form of 2016 where he scored 447 Birmingham League runs.

Myers will also be a handy acquisition in the spin department, too, with the departure of captain and leg spinner Richard Brooker.

Myers' leg spin will complement the off-spin of new skipper Kervezee and young slow left arm bowler Musharraf Shahzad meaning that Hales should have cover in all three areas for the 2018 season.

Myers returns to boost the first team ranks whilst Rob Horn also joins the club to boost the 2nd XI seamers having played for Tanworth in Arden in 2016.

Horn, who is a right arm quickie joins the club alongside compatriot Harry Kitchen, a left hand batsman and slow left arm bowler, both of whom coach with Worcestershire Cricket Board.

Yozza's Grand Slam hopes are battered

TIPTON darts star Jamie Hughes ended his Grand Slam adventure with a 5-1 win over Welshman Gerwyn Price on Tuesday night.

However, the Black Country thrower saw his hopes take a battering after two earlier group stage defeats.

'Yozza' lost to Raymond van Barneveld before then being whitewashed 5-0 by Irish youngster Steve Lennon.

"I tried my best but it just isn't happening for me," said Hughes after defeat to Lennon.

"A lot of darts weren't badly thrown but they just landed on the wrong side of a wire."

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